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# Pennsylvania Solflife

Autumn  
1988



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### COVER:

*1988 marks the 350th anniversary of the founding of New Sweden in the Delaware Valley. The colony was established primarily as a commercial venture, but there were religious objectives as well — it was the task of the Swedish Mission to America "to plant Sweden's Christian religion in the New World." In connection with that task, Johan Campanius Holm, Lutheran pastor and missionary, translated and published Luther's short catechism in Lenni Lenape; this illustration served as frontispiece in that work. (Courtesy of the Edward E. Ayer Collection, the Newberry Library, Chicago.)*

*Layout and Special Photography*  
WILLIAM K. MUNRO



# "FAITHFUL LABORERS IN THIS VINEYARD OF THE LORD": THE SWEDISH MISSION TO AMERICA

by Loretta Treese



*According to Watson's Annals, this engraving depicts the blockhouse at Wicaco that was used for worship before Gloria Dei was built. (John F. Watson's Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania in the Olden Time)*

In 1774, the Reverend Nicholas Collin wrote in his journal, "On the first Sunday after the New Year, [I] preached an English sermon on 1 John, 4:1, 'Try the spirits,' etc., and discussed the characteristics of the true faith and the duties of the members toward it. I indicated at the proper place how dangerous and foolish it is to run after uneducated, fanatical and unordained preachers . . . After the sermon I explained to the congregation the fairness and necessity of contributing a certain [sum] towards my support."<sup>1</sup> Collin, like other Swedish Lutheran ministers who came to America in the eighteenth century, thought he was going to preserve the faith, traditions and culture of the descendants of New Sweden. Instead, he coped with unforeseen administrative problems as the roles of church and state were redefined in America.

The Swedish Mission to America overlapped the religious revival known as the "Great Awakening," and Swedish ministers struggling to meet the needs of Swedish American congregations found unexpected competition from evangelical sects. They also found independent-minded congregations fully aware they held the church purse strings. These congregations were simultaneously being assimilated into Anglo-American culture as Swedish Americans lost ties with their ancestral homeland. The ministers of the Swedish Mission were well educated and several wrote accounts and journals. These provide a "snail's eye view" of religion in New Sweden — of the problems the ministers of the mission encountered, and the ways in which they dealt with them.

<sup>1</sup>Words used by King Charles XI of Sweden to describe Swedish ministers bound for America.



## THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF NEW SWEDEN

In the seventeenth century, as Sweden attempted to expand and industrialize, Dutch promoter Willem Usselinx persuaded Sweden's King Gustavus Adolphus to found a commercial company for trade and colonization. Two other Dutchmen, Peter Minuit and Samuel Blommaert, got the Swedish chancellor to listen to plans for a Swedish colony in the Delaware Valley.<sup>2</sup> By 1638, the New Sweden Company was organized. Its first expedition landed at present-day Wilmington, Delaware which the Swedes named Christina for their queen. The Dutch had already made sporadic attempts to settle the area and protested the Swedish presence. This did not frighten the Swedes away and there were no immediate hostilities.<sup>3</sup>

The Swedes intended to make big profits in the fur trade, but early results were disappointing, so they reorganized their company and expanded the colony's objectives to include a variety of agricultural and manufacturing ventures — whatever looked like it might make a riksdalar for the investors.<sup>4</sup> This meant establishing Swedish authority more firmly on the Delaware, and Governor Johan Printz was chosen to put the colony's government on a more businesslike basis. Printz arrived in 1643 and established forts, blockhouses and plantations on both sides of the Delaware. He urged Sweden to send supplies and manpower, but war between Denmark and Sweden made it difficult to free up ships.<sup>5</sup>

In 1649, a Swedish ship bound for the Delaware was lost. This started a chain of misfortunes eventually leading to the colony's demise. The Dutch became more assertive and built fortifications to command the Delaware, while Sweden became inactive in supporting her colony until 1653.<sup>6</sup> In 1654, New Sweden's Governor, Johan Rising, turned the Dutch out of one strategic fort. The Dutch found this too aggressive and sent Peter Stuyvesant marching on New Sweden. Stuyvesant ravaged the colony's farms and seized her posts until Rising capitulated; New Sweden ceased to exist in 1655.<sup>7</sup> Governor Rising and his soldiers then left the Delaware, but the Swedish colonists stayed behind — in what had suddenly become foreign territory.

## RELIGION IN NEW SWEDEN

The Swedish government stated New Sweden's religious objectives in instructions issued to her governors. Pastors were to promote piety and public worship according to Swedish Lutheran doctrine, enforce ecclesiastical discipline, instruct the young, and Christianize the Indians. They were to plant Sweden's Christian religion in the New World.<sup>8</sup>

Were they successful? Thomas Campanius Holm wrote a description of New Sweden which speaks of suc-

cessful missionary work. Holm was the grandson of Johan Campanius Holm, a Swedish pastor and committed missionary who learned the Lenni Lenape language and translated Luther's short catechism.<sup>9</sup> According to the younger Holm, the Indians were initially puzzled by the minister's role in the community. They feared that the man who "stood alone" and "talked so long" was plotting conspiracy against them. Suspicious Indians questioned the elder Holm who gradually succeeded in making them understand stories of the creation, the Trinity and Jesus. Thomas Campanius Holm wrote that the Indians had "great pleasure in hearing these things," and made his grandfather "so successful that those people who were wandering in darkness were able to see the light."<sup>10</sup>

Despite these claims, there are no records of Indians joining the Swedish Christian community, and other evidence shows that even Holm eventually found missionary work trying. In 1647, he wrote his archbishop requesting a recall and complaining of having been "in a heathenish country amongst these ferocious savages who for every year have threatened to slay us completely."<sup>11</sup> Still, Holm did not wish to abandon New Sweden's religious objectives. In the same letter, he urged the archbishop to send another two or three ministers to America.

A letter from Governor Printz indicates that Swedish pastors did successfully establish public worship. Printz wrote that church services were "conducted as in Old Sweden." Masses followed the Swedish Order of Mass according to the Psalm Book of 1614, and included the same psalms, gospels and responsive readings and singing. Swedish colonists also continued observing traditional Swedish holidays.<sup>12</sup> And, although New Sweden had forts before she had churches, a chapel may have been built at Fort Christina in 1641 or 1642. There are no records of this except a letter written in 1643 to Governor Printz instructing him to decorate the "little church" in the Swedish fashion.<sup>13</sup>

Printz had bigger plans. He moved his base of government north to Tinicum (present-day Essington, Pennsylvania) for military reasons. There, according to Thomas Campanius Holm, he built "a mansion for himself and his family which was very handsome. There was likewise a fine orchard, pleasure house and other conveniences."<sup>14</sup> The mansion was called Printzhof.

Amandus Johnson, a leading authority on New Sweden, suggests that by 1643 Printzhof also had a church, presumably with a belfry for the bell imported from Sweden in 1644. Marshall Becker, who has done recent excavations at Printzhof, is uncertain whether the complex would have included a church when fire destroyed it in 1645. He suggests a church may have been added after it was rebuilt. In any case, ministers Johan Campanius Holm and Israel Holg Fluviander dedicated a church at Tinicum on September 4, 1646.



*Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church in South Philadelphia is one of several churches built during the Swedish Mission to America. When this church was built, it was one of the finest churches in the New World. (All photographs by the author.)*



This became the center for early religious work and a community gathering place on holidays.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout its existence, New Sweden had too few ministers to serve a geographically-dispersed population. This forced adaptations in religious life. In Sweden, the Lutheran Church was an established or state religion, and its pastors were commissioned civil servants. In New Sweden, the official minister, Reorus Torkillus, was assisted by a Reverend Christopher who had no official commission. Also, it was Printz, not authorities in Sweden, who appointed Fluviander a regular preacher.<sup>16</sup> And, when the Reverend Lars Lock was involved in an uprising against Printz, he went unpunished — unlike the uprising's unlucky leader whom Printz had executed. Governor Rising intended to send Lock back to Sweden for trial, but dropped charges. Lock may have merited this special treatment because his services were so badly needed.<sup>17</sup>

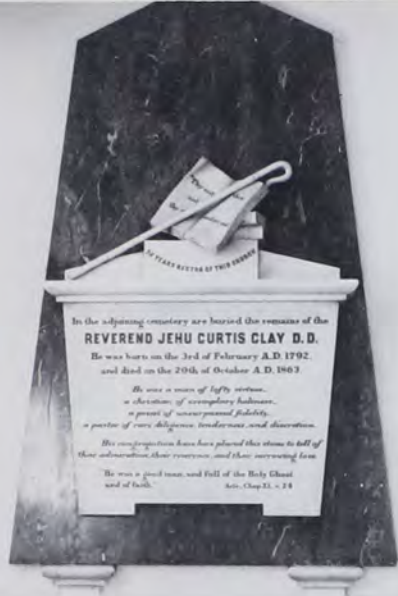
#### **RELIGION AFTER THE FALL OF NEW SWEDEN**

Stuyvesant had no love for Lutherans but permitted the conquered Swedes to practice their religion. The Swedish language and religion remained dominant in

the Delaware Valley while the Swedes gained confidence and established a form of self-government.<sup>18</sup> Eventually, according to Israel Acrelius, a Swedish minister who wrote a history of New Sweden and the Swedish Mission in the mid-eighteenth century, the Swedes and Dutch formed a single “church association” largely through intermarriage. Despite a critical shortage of ministers, additional churches were built and two parishes evolved. Christina Parish was centered at Tranhook near former Fort Christina where a small log church was built in 1667. The second parish was centered at Wicaco (present-day South Philadelphia) where the Swedes converted an old blockhouse in 1677. Swedes continued using the older church at Tinicum until 1700, but Wicaco gradually became more popular.<sup>19</sup>

Acrelius writes, “The Holland government . . . took very little trouble about public worship.” The aging Lars Lock was the Delaware Valley’s only resident minister until the Reverend Jacob Fabritius, a Dutch Lutheran, arrived from New York in 1677. Unfortunately, Fabritius went blind five years later, and Acrelius notes that, “Although there were two ministers in the churches, yet their infirmities made them hardly equal to one.”<sup>20</sup>





*A tablet commemorating the Reverend Jehu Curtis Clay, the first Episcopal minister of Gloria Dei.*

In 1664, New Netherland (including former New Sweden) was surrendered to the English. Initially, this had little effect on life on the Delaware. It wasn't until William Penn entered the picture that another transformation occurred. The decades between 1680 and 1700 meant big changes for the thousand or so Swedish Americans in the Delaware Valley, even though Penn had no intention of changing Swedish American religious practices. In fact, he petitioned the Swedish ambassador in London for Swedish ministers and books, and he even donated catechisms and a Bible to the Swedish Church — English documents which were of little use to Swedish Americans.<sup>21</sup> But Penn also wanted to create a sanctuary for Europeans persecuted for religious reasons, and he promoted Pennsylvania throughout the British Isles and Northern Europe. In response, a tidal wave of English, Welsh, Dutch, and Germans flowed up the Delaware. Penn's first immigrants generally did not belong to their countries' established churches. Instead, they were Quakers and Mennonites who may have seemed pietistic and unorthodox to Swedish Americans.

Swedish Americans accepted Penn's authority, though conflict occurred over Penn's attempts to acquire their valuable cleared land along navigable rivers. Penn had these lands resurveyed and appropriated everything not specifically mentioned in a deed (he did not acknowledge the custom that seven years' undisputed possession constituted ownership); a measure Acrelius still called "oppressive" some fifty years later.<sup>22</sup> The Swedish response was a minor rebellion. It was betrayed and quelled in short order, but its adherents lost their lands and possessions. The influx of people practicing strange religions and provoking civil disorder must have seemed threatening to Swedish Americans, and they took steps to preserve the religion and culture they had.<sup>23</sup>



*The tomb of the Reverend Andrew Rudman — one of the first members of the Swedish Mission to America. He built Gloria Dei.*

### ESTABLISHING THE SWEDISH MISSION TO AMERICA

Another account of the Swedish Mission was written by Jehu Curtis Clay, an Episcopal minister who wrote of New Sweden and the Swedish Mission in the nineteenth century. Both Clay and Acrelius tell the story of Swedish American attempts to obtain something America could not produce: educated, ordained, Swedish-speaking, Lutheran clergy. As early as 1691, Swedish Americans wrote Sweden concerning the matter but received no reply. Next they asked the Lutheran Consistory in Amsterdam to ordain and send a Swedish theology student or, failing that, to notify authorities in Sweden. After their last minister died in 1692, lay readers continued religious services, but Swedish Americans missed the preached gospel and feared for their children who were, according to Acrelius, "fonder of riding races than of attending divine service."<sup>24</sup>

Both Clay and Acrelius see Divine Providence at work when Governor Printz's nephew sailed up the Delaware and rediscovered this lost flock. Andrew Printz brought their plight to the attention of Swedish postmaster Johan Thelin, who took the matter before the Swedish king and his friends at court.<sup>25</sup> In 1692 Thelin wrote for specifics of the religious situation in the New World, and the Swedish Americans replied in a letter from their lay reader Charles Springer. Their feelings toward their new neighbors are implied in the letter in which they requested two ministers who "may well defend both themselves and us against all the false teachers and strange sects by whom we are surrounded."<sup>26</sup> In response, the Swedish king consulted Dr. Jesper Swedberg who became chief organizer for the Swedish Mission and made its initial financial arrangements. He and the king came up with three candidates for the project: Eric Bjork, Andrew Rudman,





*Urban renewal is happening all around Holy Trinity in Wilmington, Delaware. The oldest of the Swedish American churches is one of the focal points for the celebration of Wilmington's 350th anniversary in 1988.*

and Jonas Auren. Bjork and Rudman were to stay in America; Auren was to return and submit a report.<sup>27</sup>

When the Swedish ministers arrived in 1697 they created a sensation in the Swedish American community. According to Bjork, "People flocked in great numbers to see us." Rudman wrote, "They look to us as if we were angels from heaven."<sup>28</sup> The Swedish ministers organized an effort to build new churches, and this seems to have rallied the Swedish American community and given it a sense of identity. Work progressed quickly, and Christina parish dedicated Holy Trinity in 1699.<sup>29</sup>

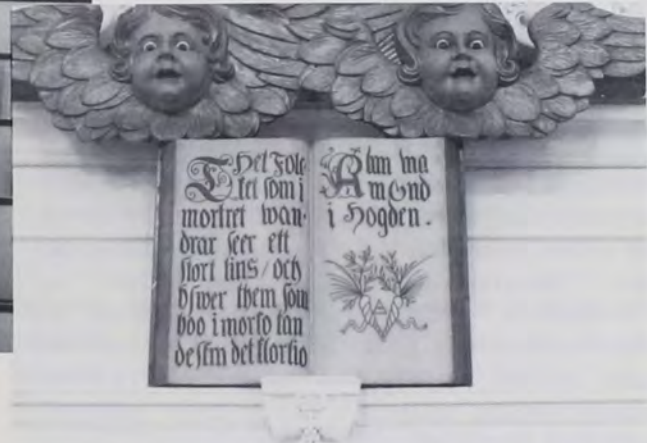
Building a new church further north on the Delaware was delayed by disagreements over where to locate it.

Should it be at Wicaco, Tinicum, or Passayunk where land had been purchased years ago for a parsonage and glebe? The matter was decided by lot, and Gloria Dei was dedicated at Wicaco in 1700.<sup>30</sup> "Thus," Bjork wrote, "through God's blessing we have completed this great work and built two fine churches superior to any built in this country . . . so that the English themselves . . . wonder at what we have done. It is but lately that the two governors with their suites have come to this place and visited the churches."<sup>31</sup> Bjork and Rudman intended to carry out all the normal ministerial duties. They planned to perform divine service, administer church ordinances, visit their parishioners, and teach the young. In two letters home, Bjork admitted this was not going to be easy.<sup>32</sup>





*Inside Gloria Dei. Once it was built, a Swedish minister wrote that it only needed decorations, "such as a couple of bells, handsome chalices and pattens . . ." His letter did not mention a baptismal font so perhaps the church already had one. The font at the right of the altar is thought to have been brought from the old church at Tinicum, having been previously imported from Sweden sometime in the 1600s.*



## PROBLEMS FACED BY THE SWEDISH MISSION TO AMERICA

Bjork was right. Dependent upon European manpower and faced with a population that became more geographically scattered each year, the Swedish Mission had big problems meeting the needs of its congregations. Swedish Americans continually complained that they could not see their ministers or attend divine service as often as they wished. The original plan was for Swedish Americans in New Jersey to belong to Wicaco or Christina parish — whichever was closer. But from the start, these congregations were not satisfied with churches and ministers across the unbridged Delaware; they wanted their own ministers and campaigned for one Lars Tollstadius. Tollstadius had arrived in 1701 misrepresenting himself as the commissioned Swedish replacement for Rudman's position at Wicaco. It became known in America that Tollstadius had been declared unfit for the Swedish Mission by Swedish authorities. Yet the Jersey congregations were adamant, and official Swedish ministers could do nothing to stop them.<sup>33</sup>

*Another artifact from Gloria Dei originally from the old church at Tinicum. This wood sculpture depicts cherubs and an open Bible. The text reads, "Glory to God in the highest," and "The people that have walked in darkness have seen a great light." Thomas Campanius Holm used the same phrase in a section of his book on New Sweden where he discussed his grandfather's missionary work among the Lenni Lenape."*

After Tollstadius' death in 1706, the Jersey congregations campaigned for another black sheep. Jonas Auren had come as a commissioned minister, but had since developed sectarian views and joined the Seventh Day Dunkers. Still, the Jersey congregations insisted on having him and managed to get Bjork's grudging consent.<sup>34</sup> Finally, in 1714, Swedish authorities recognized the two Swedish American communities in New Jersey as separate parishes that would share an official minister.<sup>35</sup>



Swedish American congregations also suffered neglect during vacancies caused by a minister's unexpected death or departure. One long vacancy occurred at Wicaco between 1733 and 1737, after the Reverend Gabriel Falk was deposed for making unproven charges of incest between an elder vestryman and his daughter. During these four years, Acrelius writes that people "resorted to the English congregation or wandered around like straying sheep that had no shepherd." Falk's successor, the Reverend John Dylander, found his congregation greatly reduced but was popular enough to build it up again.<sup>36</sup>

Two particularly troublesome vacancies occurred several years later: After Dylander's death in 1741, Wicaco suffered a vacancy of three years; in New Jersey, when the Reverend Peter Tranberg was transferred to Christina in 1741, the congregations had no minister until 1748.<sup>37</sup> These vacancies occurred during the height of the Great Awakening which Acrelius calls "a most unfortunate time for a clergyman." It was a time when Swedish American congregations suddenly had plenty of choice when their own pulpits were vacant.<sup>38</sup>

George Whitefield, the great English preacher of the Evangelical Revival, arrived in Philadelphia in 1739, and his followers, the New Lights, began attracting Swedish Americans. He was followed by a Count Zinzendorf and his adherents, a branch of the Hussite movement that had come from a European settlement they called "Herrnhut." This evangelical, pietist sect called "Moravian Brethren," "Zinzendorfers," or "Herrnhutters," created particular problems for Swedish ministers since Zinzendorf was also a Lutheran pastor and his doctrine had recognizable Lutheran elements. Swedes ordained by Herrnhutters sometimes represented themselves as Swedish ministers.<sup>39</sup>

The Reverend Gabriel Nesman, Dylander's successor, found his congregation slipping away to the New Lights and Zinzendorfers, and was forced to travel around the parish and exhort people back to church. In New Jersey, the Herrnhutters tried hard to fill the Swedish clerical gap. There Paul Bruselius, a Zinzendorfer who spoke Swedish, offered his services cheap. Half the congregation wanted him, the other half did not, and one Sunday when he tried to preach, fistfights ensued.<sup>40</sup> Also in New Jersey, Abraham Reinke, another Zinzendorfer, attracted many Swedish Americans in the same way, but he proved too fanatical in the end. The congregations eventually tired of these imposters, but the Zinzendorfers did keep the Jersey parishes from uniting and requesting an official Swedish minister until 1745.<sup>41</sup>

Meeting the needs of their congregations was not the Swedish Mission's only problem, for in some ways Swedish ministers felt their own needs were not being met. Like other members of established churches, they experienced financial problems due to lack of govern-

ment support. They found it difficult to raise money for church maintenance and collect a salary they could live on comfortably. Each parish's income came from members' subscriptions, from church property rents, and from fees collected for marriages and burials. Yet parish financial matters were administered by lay vestrymen and church wardens. The minister himself had little financial control.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, Swedish ministers quickly found that few people actually contributed what they subscribed. Subscriptions were legal obligations, but trying to enforce them would have angered congregations and netted little gain — the Quakers who were in control politically had no love for paid clergy.<sup>43</sup> As an answer to financial problems, the Reverend Andrew Hesselius of Christina proposed tithes, but was advised against the idea. Tithes, too, would have had to be voluntary; they would not be enforced as they were in Europe.<sup>44</sup>

Swedish Americans did contribute more if they liked their pastor. The Wicaco congregation liked Dylander and he had few financial problems. But they did not like his successor, Nesman. They complained that his sermons were too long, and that he "pointed the finger" too often. Subscriptions, as well as church attendance, fell while Nesman ministered to the Wicaco congregation.<sup>45</sup>

Several ministers did find ways to deal with their financial problems. The Reverend Andrew Sandel, for example, Rudman's successor at Wicaco, married money. Perhaps because of this, Acrelius writes that Sandel was able to live with his congregation "as in a golden age." The Reverend John Eneberg of Christina, on the other hand, simply made no fuss, but lived cheaply in the houses of other Swedish Americans.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, by mid-century, Acrelius sarcastically marvelled that the same congregations that had built Holy Trinity and Gloria Dei could no longer support their ministers, despite being materially better off themselves.<sup>47</sup>

Acrelius also notes that lack of income in the Swedish American churches was compounded by poor financial management on the part of ignorant vestrymen. Christina, for instance, would have had a windfall when Wilmington was laid out on the church glebe, except for inept parish vestrymen and their bookkeeper, the wily Quaker Edward Followell. Trustees were appointed at Christina, but most could "neither write nor cast accounts." Money was lent without security while the Reverend Peter Tranberg kept silent in the interests of peace. When Acrelius succeeded Tranberg, he told the congregation he "had not come to look after their money, but after their souls." Yet he urged them to "open their eyes in time." Acrelius became a co-trustee but estimated Christina had already lost about £1500 through poor management.<sup>48</sup>

Later in the century, the Reverend Nicholas Collin





*Saint James in Kingessing, Pennsylvania — the newest of the Swedish American churches was just 225 years old in 1987. Its current rector calls it a “holy island” in the midst of Philadelphia.*

also found church business laxly administered when he transferred from Jersey to Wicaco. In 1788, he tried to reform the collection of ground rents and incurred considerable hostility. An opposition party developed and vindictively reduced his salary.<sup>49</sup> While serving in New Jersey, Collin had studied church records and concluded that collecting an adequate salary had been a problem for virtually every Swedish minister since 1722. “To insist on one’s rights is not advisable,” he wrote, “as the congregation would thereby be reduced or antagonism aroused in many.” Ironically, many members told him they would give more if they could have divine service more frequently.<sup>50</sup>

#### **THE SWEDISH MISSION ADDRESSES ITS PROBLEMS**

Vacancies and competition from the sects were problems the Swedish Mission shared with other contemporary churches, so Anglican, Swedish, and German Lutheran clergy tried to cooperate to overcome their difficulties. Early in the eighteenth century, for example, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) made efforts to introduce Anglican worship among Pennsylvania’s English, Welsh, and dissatisfied Quakers. When, as a result, new churches sprang up

and the Anglicans also experienced a shortage of ministers, Acrelius notes several instances where Swedish ministers preached for English congregations. Some were even paid by the SPG.<sup>51</sup>

Swedish ministers also shared their church facilities. When the English church was enlarged in 1710, the English worshipped at Wicaco, preferring the Swedish church to a Presbyterian church which had also been offered. English services at Wicaco continued for three Sundays and were concluded by a Swedish hymn.<sup>52</sup> Acrelius also describes Swedish ministers preaching for German Lutherans without a pastor. For example, Dylander held German services at Wicaco, and Tranberg traveled to Lancaster to preach for German congregations.<sup>53</sup>

The Herrnhutter invasion brought established Swedish and German churches closer together. An alliance of Swedish and German Lutheran clergy was proposed (the synod or ministerium of Pennsylvania), but could not overcome certain obstacles. German pastors could not agree on whether the Herrnhutters were really in error, while Swedish ministers hesitated to violate their own church law or risk joint property ownership with Germans who quickly threatened to outnumber them.<sup>54</sup> But, although Acrelius acknowledges





*Christ Church in Bridgeport, Pennsylvania. Only the soft "swish" of cars along the nearby Schuylkill Expressway recalls the twentieth century. Once called one of the Swedish Mission's "country churches," its neighborhood is still somewhat rural although corporate campuses are springing up nearby.*

fewer problems with the sects in the 1750's, the German and Swedish ministers continued to meet to promote unity in doctrine while "fencing out . . . the erratic sects."<sup>55</sup>

When the Reverend Charles Magnus von Wrangel served the Swedish Mission in the 1760's, he became the good friend of Dr. Henry Muhlenberg, thus increasing cooperation between the Swedish and German Lutheran churches. There is evidence Wrangel wanted to truly unite both Lutheran churches with the Anglican church, but this plan appears to have gotten lost in the morass of pre-Revolutionary politics.<sup>56</sup> Wrangel did, however, succeed in building two new churches to serve groups of Swedish Americans living inconveniently far away from existing churches. Under Wrangel's leadership, the Kingsessing and Upper Merion parishes were formed, and Saint James and Christ Church were built and incorporated with Wicaco under a new charter from the Pennsylvania government.<sup>57</sup>

After the Revolution, competition from the sects abated. Shortly after arriving in the 1770's, Collin described America as a place where "all kinds of religious nonsense" was preached. He criticized uneducated preachers and "frivolous" church members who "run from one [sect] to another." Yet after the Revolution he reported "no more dangerous sects within or around the congregations." The reason? "The

sects have not had any permanent pastors," he wrote. As the Great Awakening wound down, it seems the sects also had to deal with the problem of vacancies.<sup>58</sup>

#### **END OF THE SWEDISH MISSION TO AMERICA**

The Swedish Mission to America did not end abruptly. It came to an end because Swedish Americans had been gradually absorbed into Anglo-American culture. After the fall of New Sweden, few Swedes migrated to the Delaware Valley. Instead, English-speaking people moved in all around the Swedish Americans. By the 1720's most Swedish Americans were conversant in English, and Swedish Americans and Anglo-Americans started going to each other's churches if they proved more geographically convenient.<sup>59</sup>

By mid-century, Peter Kalm, a Swedish naturalist visiting America, found Swedish Americans ignorant of their own history. He wrote that they were ashamed to speak Swedish "because they fear they may not in such a case be real English." Acrelius wrote that only older Swedish Americans considered themselves Swedish. Younger Swedish Americans adopted English when they intermarried with English speakers, while children learned it when they were apprenticed. Finally, Swedish Americans began requesting Swedish ministers who spoke English, and Swedish ministers adopted the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>60</sup> As a result of this intermixing,



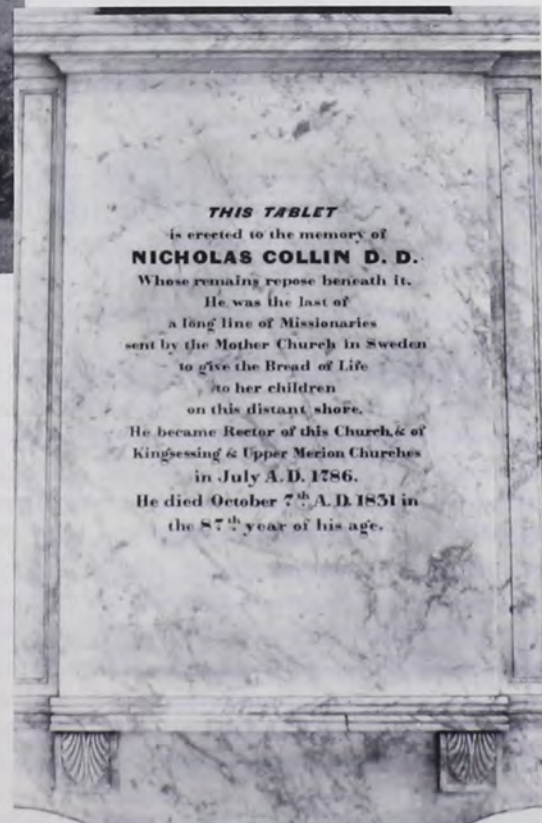


*After the American Revolution, Nicholas Collin tried to unite factions by building Trinity Church in Swedesboro, New Jersey.*

Collin, in 1775, discouraged establishing an English church near the Swedish American church at Raccoon (present-day Swedesboro, New Jersey) because the congregations were "so closely united through kinship" and, moreover, barely able to support one minister, let alone two.<sup>61</sup>

The Revolution also played a part in ending the Swedish Mission. It created special problems for Swedish ministers who tried to remain neutral, but who only earned the distrust of Patriots and Loyalists alike. A typical incident occurred at Wicaco, in 1777, when the Revolutionary government ordered the Reverend Andrew Goranson to hand over the church bell. (All church bells were being removed to prevent their falling into British hands.) Goranson protested that neither the British nor the Continental government had anything to do with himself, his church or his bell; but he could not prevent the bell from being removed to Lancaster.<sup>62</sup>

In New Jersey, the militia took the Reverend Collin prisoner and marched him toward a British camp until a German Lutheran official paid his bail. The next day, given a choice between the British camp and a Patriot



*A marker commemorating Dr. Nicholas Collin, one of the last members of the Swedish Mission to America. After the Revolution, Dr. Collin could have returned to Sweden but chose to remain in America.*



loyalty oath, he took the oath but with reservations.<sup>63</sup> When the English occupied Collin's Jersey parishes, he was again accused of being a spy and narrowly escaped hanging. In general, Collin abhorred the war and condemned all soldiers who wreaked havoc in New Jersey. He also resented the factions created among his congregation, and later tried to reconcile them by building a new church at Raccoon.<sup>64</sup>

The American Revolution also caused the King of Sweden to reevaluate the Swedish Mission. The king had no sympathy for a movement challenging the rights of kings, and feared Republican ideals might be unwittingly imported to Sweden by returning ministers. In 1785, the king stipulated America would get no more Swedish ministers unless Swedish Americans paid all voyage expenses, part of which had formerly been covered by the crown.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, however, Swedish Americans were wondering whether they might not prefer American ministers to foreign ones. This would give them more local control and eliminate what they, by then, considered foreign interference. Wicaco was glad to accept Collin as pastor in 1786, but wanted to make its own appointments thereafter. The Swedish American congregations of Christina and New Jersey agreed. They submitted their sentiments to the Swedish archbishop who obtained the king's approval. In 1789, the vestries received a letter saying they could choose their own ministers with the king's best wishes. The Swedish Mission to America was over.<sup>66</sup>

#### **SWEDISH AMERICAN CHURCHES BECOME PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCHES**

The previously mentioned Episcopal minister Jehu Curtis Clay wrote: "The Swedish Church though Lutheran in doctrine is Episcopal in government." He suggests this is why Swedish American churches affiliated with the new Protestant Episcopal Church rather than with German Lutheran churches once the war was over.<sup>67</sup> In addition, there were several historic similarities between Anglican and Swedish Lutheran churches: both were state churches; both maintained they preserved the apostolic succession; and both administered traditions and sacraments the same way. Swedberg, the chief organizer of the Swedish mission, had been friendly with the Bishop of London, and they had agreed their Delaware Valley missionaries would work closely together. This started the long history of cooperation between the two that worked in conjunction with the cultural assimilation of Swedish Americans.<sup>68</sup>

After the Swedish Mission was over, Collin did try to find an American Lutheran pastor to take over for him in Swedesboro. However, the Swedesboro vestry engaged an Episcopal minister in 1792. In the same year, the Reverend Lars Girellus returned to Sweden and Christina also engaged an Episcopal minister. Though

Collin remained at Wicaco until his death in 1831, Wicaco began engaging Episcopal assistants in 1787.<sup>69</sup>

The Swedish Mission to America spanned the eighteenth century, and during that century conditions transformed the roles of minister and congregation into what we would recognize today as modern and American. Clay writes of the Reverend Andrew Sandel going through the aisles of the church at Wicaco early in the eighteenth century to publicly examine the congregation on their catechism and the content of his sermon. By the time Clay published his book in the 1830's this custom was decidedly passé. "Such a practice in our time," Clay had to explain, "would be apt to make thin churches."<sup>70</sup>

#### **AFTERWORD:**

##### **SWEDISH AMERICAN CHURCHES TODAY**

Five churches built during the Swedish Mission to America still operate as Protestant Episcopal Churches. Holy Trinity can be found in Wilmington, Delaware, and Trinity (the church Collin built) operates in Swedesboro, New Jersey. Wrangel's two churches welcome residents of busy Kingessing, and quieter Bridgeport, Pennsylvania. Gloria Dei, the church at Wicaco, is huddled practically beneath I-95 in a quiet area of South Philadelphia. All five are affectionately known as "Old Swedes'."

The most famous of the churches are the two oldest. Holy Trinity in Wilmington even has its own curator, Lisa Nichols. According to Nichols, the church is a "pilgrimage spot." "Just about every Swede who comes to America," she says, "wants to come here." Holy Trinity gets lots of visitors and handles lots of tours. In affiliation with the Delaware Swedish Colonial Society, it holds Swedish festivals such as the Lucia Festival and the Midsummer Festival.

The Reverend David B. Rivers of Gloria Dei also gets visitors from Sweden. "In the summer," he reports, "there's about a busload a week. They stop to see the church on the way from New York to Washington, D.C." Gloria Dei holds a Swedish Lutheran service once a month and celebrates a Lucia Festival which Rivers describes as "very popular. It's a mob scene." He adds, "Also, at Christmas, we have a 'Julotta' — a Swedish service held early Christmas morning."

Trinity in Swedesboro, New Jersey is located in a very rural area but twenty-five to thirty visitors per year manage to come and tour the church. Trinity, too, celebrates a Lucia Festival. Its former rector had a great interest in the church's history and, though retired, still corresponds with the King of Sweden. A large billboard outside the church proudly proclaims that the King of Sweden once visited.

Christ Church in Bridgeport, Pennsylvania, is located in a largely Roman Catholic neighborhood, but it is a neighborhood extremely proud of its history. Its own



Lucia Festival is a "popular local event" according to the Reverend John Miller. However, he comments, visitors to Christ Church tend to be people doing genealogical research and looking for Swedish American ancestors in the graveyard.

Saint James in Kingessing, the newest of the Swedish American churches, celebrated its own 225th anniversary in 1987. Its rector, the Reverend Reed Brinkman, mentions that the church also holds a Lucia Festival to keep the community aware of its roots. Nevertheless, he reports the congregation has no direct descendants of New Sweden and few visitors.

\* \* \*

For this year which marks the 350th anniversary of the founding of New Sweden, numerous special events — many involving the King and Queen of Sweden — are being planned, especially by the mayor's office in Wilmington. Many of the "Old Swedes" churches have been asked to participate, and this seems only appropriate. For, although the isolated communities that built these churches to preserve their religion and culture no longer exist, and although these "Old Swedes" churches are American churches now, they are, nonetheless, institutions which recall an absorbing part of the Delaware Valley's colonial past.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Donald B. Kelley of Villanova University, and the rectors and staff members of the Swedish American churches who kindly furnished information for this article.

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<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 9-10, 12-13.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 14-15, 30-31.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>8</sup>Benson, *Swedes in America*, pp. 28-29; Jehu Curtis Clay, *Annals of the Swedes on the Delaware*, 4th ed., with an introduction by Henry S. Henschen (Chicago: John Ericsson Memorial Committee, 1938), pp. 31-32, 39-42.

<sup>9</sup>Clay, *Annals*, pp. 45-48; Amandus Johnson, *The Swedish Settlements on the Delaware 1638-1664*, 2 vols. (NY: Burt Franklin, 1911; reprint ed., NY: Burt Franklin, 1970), 2:560.

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<sup>19</sup>Israel Acrelius, *A History of New Sweden*, trans. William M. Reynolds (Philadelphia: Publication Fund of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1874; reprint ed., Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, Inc., 1966), pp. 176-177.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 100, 176-178.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 125-127.

<sup>23</sup>Acrelius, *New Sweden*, p. 116; Adolph B. Benson, ed., *Peter Kalm's Travels in North America*, 2 vols. (NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1937) 2:724, 732-733.

<sup>24</sup>Acrelius, *New Sweden*, pp. 179-181; Clay, *Annals*, p. 58.

<sup>25</sup>Acrelius, *New Sweden*, pp. 181-182; Clay, *Annals*, pp. 62-64.

<sup>26</sup>Acrelius, *New Sweden*, pp. 179-181; Clay, *Annals*, pp. 68-70.

<sup>27</sup>Acrelius, *New Sweden*, pp. 197-199; Clay, *Annals*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>28</sup>Clay, *Annals*, pp. 83, 89.

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<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>36</sup>Acrelius, *New Sweden*, pp. 233-239.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 241-243, 329-336.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 244-249, 332-335.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 243, 332-333.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 334-335.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 215, 221.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 270-271.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 278-279.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 239-240, 252-253.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 221, 288-289.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 289-292, 297-298, 308-310.

<sup>49</sup>Johnson, *Journal of Nicholas Collin*, pp. 48-50.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 220-222.

<sup>51</sup>Nelson H. Burr, "Early History of the Swedes and the Episcopal Church in America," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 7(1938): p. 120.

<sup>52</sup>Acrelius, *New Sweden*, pp. 219-220; Clay, *Annals*, p. 123.

<sup>53</sup>Acrelius, *New Sweden*, pp. 237-239; 294-295.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 244-247.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>56</sup>Acrelius, *New Sweden*, pp. 346-347; Burr, "Swedes and the Episcopal Church," p. 127.

<sup>57</sup>Acrelius, *New Sweden*, pp. 346-347.

<sup>58</sup>Johnson, *Journal of Nicholas Collin*, pp. 25, 226-227, 295-296.

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<sup>60</sup>Acrelius, *New Sweden*, p. 360; Benson, *Kalm's Travels*, 2:716; Clay, *Annals*, p. 147; Johnson, *Journal of Nicholas Collin*, p. 45.

<sup>61</sup>Johnson, *Journal of Nicholas Collin*, pp. 232-233.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 237-238.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 240, 246-249, 291-292.

<sup>65</sup>Grant W. Andersen, "The American Revolution and the Swedish Church in the Delaware Valley," *Swedish Pioneer History* 27 (October 1976): pp. 264-265.

<sup>66</sup>Andersen, "American Revolution and the Swedish Church," p. 265; Clay, *Annals*, pp. 157, 160-161, 167-168.

<sup>67</sup>Clay, *Annals*, pp. 168-176.

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# METZLER'S SCHOOL, THEN AND NOW

by Rhoda Horning Denlinger



*Exterior views of Metzler's School taken by Mrs. Denlinger during her visit in February, 1987; all the remaining photographs were taken by her at that same time.*



## INTRODUCTION

One-room schools came into existence to meet the educational needs of rural children. In a pioneer settlement the schoolhouse was erected shortly after the church, "both frequently appearing long before a real community center had been established";<sup>1</sup> indeed, these two buildings would perhaps *become* the community center. The teacher who had the privilege of instructing the neighborhood children in these schools was responsible for teaching all the grades therein — often as many as eight. Although the task was enormous, education was deemed an important part of daily life and, by the late 1800s and early 1900s, one-room schools proliferated. Indeed, in many areas, "education simply grew, district by district, like wild crops in untilled soil, according to local school arrangements made by groups of farm families."<sup>2</sup> Not surprisingly, then, in 1938 a total of 202,505 rural school buildings existed in the United States,<sup>3</sup> and many of these were one-room structures.

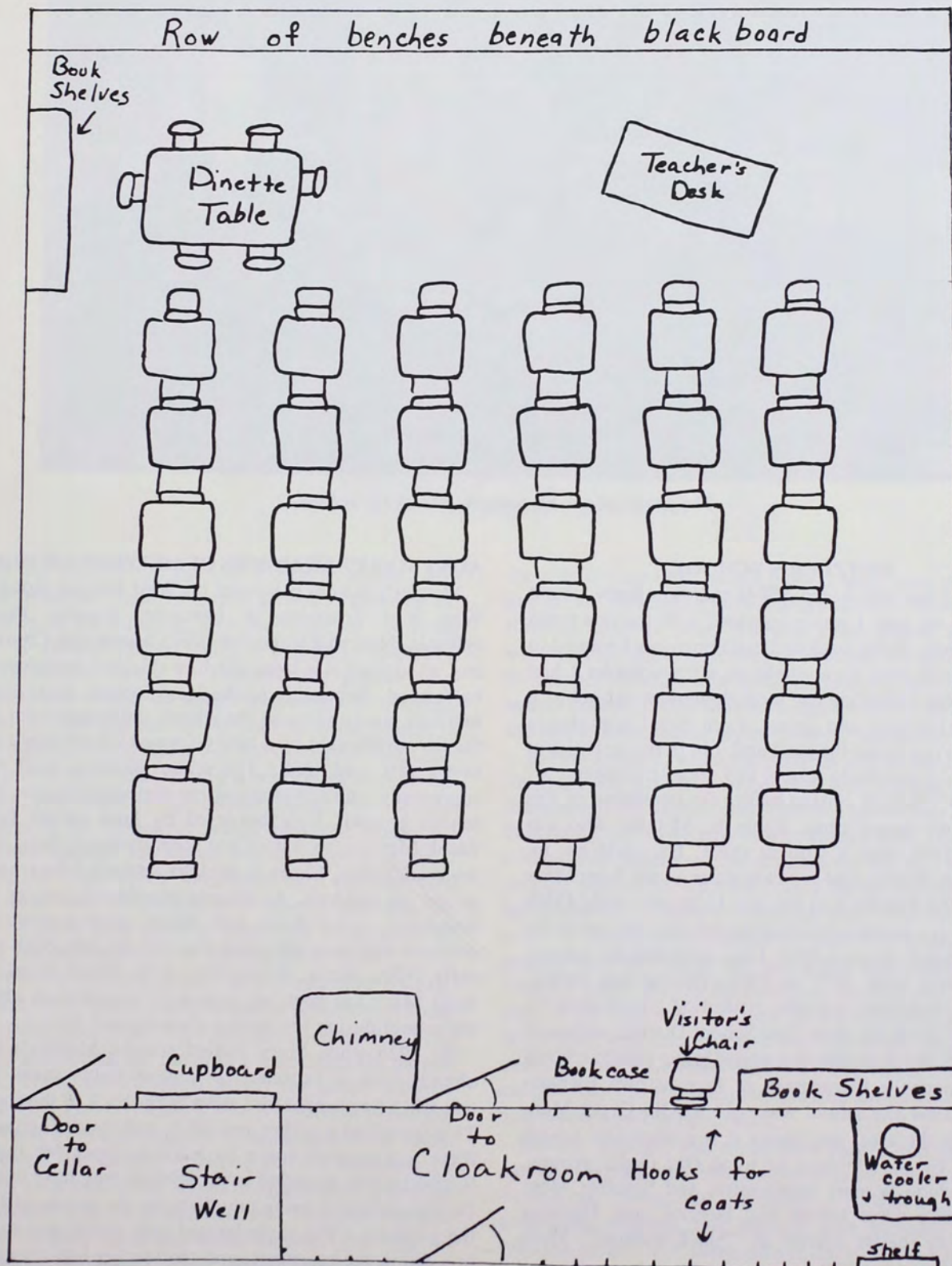
As educational goals and ideas became more refined, however, little country schools were often seen as rather crude educational facilities lacking adequate equipment

and constrained by narrow perspectives. As a result, the general trend (starting in the 1920s) was to begin consolidating these small rural schools into larger, more impressive facilities which would provide a broader educational base for young Americans. But while it seemed feasible and efficient to school administrators (and to most parents) to push for consolidation and broader educational goals, there was, in some areas, a conservative element in the community intent on keeping education geared to preparing children for operating a farm and being satisfied with that idea.

In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the Amish and the Old Order Mennonites are two such conservative groups; they are less interested in learning new trades and becoming educated in a broader sense than in preserving an agrarian way of life. So they continue to send their children to one-room schools, constructing them if necessary, but often buying buildings no longer needed or wanted by public school systems. Thus, some one-room schools that might have disappeared forever from the rural landscape have managed to survive, and even to thrive. The following is the story of one such school.



# Floor Plan of Metzler's School 1987







*The front of the classroom, Metzler's School.*

### **METZLER'S SCHOOL**

Before I had ever heard of FM radios or knew what a television set was, I was acquainted with the one-room schoolhouse. As far back as I can remember I wanted to go to school, and occasionally as a pre-schooler I had the privilege of visiting our local elementary school with my older brothers and sisters. Even then I was always thrilled to run down the road and join in the activities at Metzler's, a one-room school in Lancaster County.

Metzler's School existed before the beginning of this century; my grandfather, Elmer N. Metzler, who was born in 1897, was a student there. His children, including my mother and her twin sister — my Aunt Mary — attended Metzler's in the late 1920s and early 1930s when it was a public school serving all the children in the neighborhood. Born in 1951, I also attended this school, in the years from 1957 to 1963. During this period, Metzler's remained a public institution coordinated by principals from the West Earl School District, although some local children then did attend larger public schools like Farmersville Elementary or Brownstown Elementary. In 1964 the school was sold to Old Order Mennonites in the area, and today it is a parochial school attended by the children of local Old Order groups. These include Wenger Mennonites and Stauffer Mennonites who drive horses and buggies, and Horning Mennonites (better known as "black bumper" Mennonites) who drive cars.

### **AUNT MARY'S MEMORIES OF METZLER'S SCHOOL**

Metzler's School is located on West Metzler Road in West Earl Township in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Next to it stands Metzler's Mennonite Church, and all around it is land which to this day continues to be farmed. According to the local farmer, Isaac Zimmerman, who now owns the school, the property for the facility was bought by a newly-formed school board between 1850 and 1860.<sup>4</sup> The school building itself was supposedly built sometime within that same decade. The school grounds were bordered by land owned by a Jacob Metzler, so it does not seem unusual, then, that my grandfather, Elmer N. Metzler, attended the school, as did his children. As already mentioned, two of his daughters, twins Anna and Mary, were among the children who were educated there in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Anna, my mother, is no longer living, so Aunt Mary has been my source of information about the school during the period she attended there.<sup>5</sup>

By 1928 when Mary started school, Metzler's had already been in existence for almost eighty years, but was still being heated by a stove in the back of the room. This stove had a jacket around it, and inside the jacket there was enough space to bake potatoes for lunch. (Children who attended larger schools may have missed the experience of being tantalized by the aroma of baking potatoes.) The stove burned coal which was stored in a bin in the basement, and the teacher had the chilly





*The back of the classroom, Metzler's School.*

job of starting the fire on cold mornings so the room would be warm when the pupils arrived. There was no plumbing in the building, so it was necessary to bring water — carried by two students in a large bucket — from a nearby farm. The bucket was placed on a grooved stick so that its weight was evenly distributed; each child held one end of the stick with the bucket in the middle. Carrying water was but one of the tasks parceled out to the students, and it was considered an enjoyable job because it meant being out of the schoolroom for fifteen or twenty minutes. Mary also mentioned another job which was assigned to students: care of the flag, which was raised each morning and taken down each afternoon. Daily chores were taken in stride by these rural children who were accustomed to having the responsibility of jobs to do at home.

But there was a time to play, as well as a time to work, for these farm children who attended one-room schools in the 1920s and 1930s. On rainy days and on very cold winter days, recess and lunchtime were times for indoor games. Then, according to Mary, the older children often played Partner, a game which involves the pairing of girls and boys and requires an equal number of each. The players are divided into two groups according to sex, and after one group leaves the room each player in both groups is given a number; one boy and one girl will, of course, have the same number and can be matched as “partners.” They will sit beside each other

for a brief time until all the players have been matched up; fifth- through eighth-graders always found it a thrilling game to play. Another game played indoors was Marbles; these were flicked between the thumb and first finger toward a hole in the middle of a fifteen-inch-square board. Points were awarded when the marble hit the center hole; recess, even indoors, was always fun.

In fine weather, when the children played outdoors in the fresh air, Roundtown baseball was popular, and if the students decided to play with two teams they had an interesting way to determine who batted first. They used a hand-over-hand method of going up the bat, and the captain who could reach his thumb across the top of the bat could opt to have his team bat first. Another game enjoyed outdoors was Rabbit Around. In this game one person was “it”; he or she had a ball and could try to “catch” other players by throwing the ball and hitting them when they were off base. After a certain number of players were caught there was no longer any base, and the game continued until all those remaining were caught. Mary also remembers playing games called Fox and Geese and Flying Colors.

School, though, was more than chores and fun and games; there was also studying to be done. The three R's — reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic — as well as history, geography, English, and spelling were included in the subjects taught. For these classes the students had textbooks of some sort, but not much in the way of addi-





*Water cooler and drinking cups in the corner of the cloakroom of Metzler's School.*

tional resources. A small library in the back of the room provided them with a little extra reading material, none of which was required. On one day of the week art and music were included in the schedule. According to Mary, "a music teacher came around to the school and taught us the rudiments of music"; since the furniture in the schoolroom included a piano, it was used in music instruction. Art was included in the regular teacher's schedule of classes, and after the lesson the children's creations were hung on the walls to decorate the schoolroom.

The basic subjects were taught — and a similar schedule followed — Monday through Thursday. On Friday, however, there were often special activities such as spelling or geography matches in the afternoon. Children involved in the competition stood up around the room and remained standing as long as they could spell or answer questions correctly; the match continued until one student — the winner — was left. After a week of classes this type of contest was probably a pleasant relief from routine, and a good beginning for the weekend.

During Mary's years at Metzler's School there were eight grades included in the roster of classes, and as many as thirty-five to forty students. (Sometimes the older grades "doubled up" for classes.) There were both single and double desks, with first graders seated at the front, and eighth graders at the back of the room. All of Mary's classmates walked to school — as she did

— and each weekday would see pupils approaching the building from every direction: the Metzlers and Buchs from the west; the Zimmermans and Hoovers from the south; the Andeses and Newswangers from the north; and the Burkholders, Garmans, and Martins from the east. Considering their names, it is not surprising to learn that many (but not all) of these children spoke the Pennsylvania German dialect fluently. But in school the children were required to speak English, and all the classes were conducted in English. (Mary says she never heard her teachers speak Pennsylvania German.) But those pupils who could speak the dialect usually did so on the playground.

Although she was unable to recall a lot of details about her teachers, Mary did remember the names of four — Miss Jackson, Miss Emily Brossman, Mr. Michael Wenger, and Mr. Stark. She was not aware of their educational backgrounds, but felt they were all well-qualified to teach, and well able to keep good order in the classroom. In addition to maintaining discipline and teaching various academic subjects, the teachers worked at building good character traits such as industriousness and inner strength.<sup>6</sup> Theirs was a big job and for the most part they did it well; Metzler's School provided a sound beginning for many of its students, including my mother and my Aunt Mary; they continued their education at West Earl High School from which they graduated in 1939.





*Playground and toilet facilities in the schoolyard.*

#### **METZLER'S SCHOOL AS I REMEMBER IT**

When I started school in 1957, Metzler's was not the only option for me; there were larger public schools in both Farmersville and Brownstown which were available to our family. However, Metzler's was at that time still a public school, and my parents' educational goals for their children did not include superior buildings and teachers, or an advanced curriculum. In fact, they seemed to feel that what was good enough for them was good enough for us. So it was at Metzler's School where my formal education began.

The building was basically the same as it had been twenty years earlier when the previous generation attended there. Sometime during those twenty years, though, the stove was removed from the schoolroom, and a coal furnace was installed in the basement. Directly above the furnace toward the rear of the room was a heat register measuring about four feet square. When the furnace was fired up in the winter, we liked to stand on the heat register and warm up from the cold outdoors. (The girls had to be careful, though, to hold on to their skirts.) There was still a piano in the front of the room, and it looked as though it could have been as old as the school, but it was fun to hide behind and a good place to share secrets. There was still no indoor plumbing, and students continued to carry water for drinking and handwashing purposes, but we did have paper cups which were discarded after one use. Of course without plumbing there were no indoor toilet facilities, and two outhouses were located in the schoolyard; in the winter one's visits there were as infrequent as possible. Two

signs hanging at the back of the room regulated outhouse traffic — each had one green and one red side. Green signaled a vacancy, red meant the toilet was occupied. Students wishing to use the facilities when both signs were red simply had to wait patiently for their turn.

So in the years between Mary's and my attendance at Metzler's a few changes had taken place, but it seemed that some things there would never change. Games, for example, had not changed much, and Partner continued to be a popular indoor game when it rained. Also, our teacher often volunteered to play the piano for Musical Chairs during the lunch period; not much of a break for her. On sunny days, baseball and Fox and Geese were still popular, as were Rabbit Around, Collie Over, and Red Rover. Because the school grounds adjoined the property of Metzler's Mennonite Church, we sometimes extended our playground to include an area of the church property. There were trees on the church land and in the fall we played with their leaves which we would arrange into "houses." The girls "lived" in the houses and the boys were their "horses"; each girl would have a piece of bale rope, and when it was time to go out for the day the girls would take their ropes, "hitch up" their horses and go for a spin. Interestingly, most of the families of these children used horses as a means of transportation, so even in playground activities there was not a great deal of innovation or modernism displayed.

Besides games, studying continued to be a vital part of the activities occurring inside the doors of Metzler's



School. Math was still called arithmetic, so the three R's remained alive and well. History, geography, spelling, and English were four more subjects covered on a regular basis. At the time I attended, music was taught by our teacher, Mrs. Griffith, and consisted wholly of singing songs; we learned nothing about notes or timing. Art class was held on Friday afternoons with a seasonal project completed every week. Every year it seemed there was a new idea on how to make an Easter candy basket out of construction paper. For our main subjects we had textbooks and workbooks — all of which were read and completed during school hours; we never had any homework. Because each class had a short session on each subject, there was usually plenty of time to do workbook and reading assignments while other grades had their class time. Extra resource material was rather sparse, but about once a month a bookmobile provided our school with additional reading material. One more project for which we were responsible was memory work. At the beginning of the school year each student was given a brown composition book in which to write poems, songs, or Bible verses to be memorized. Students often worked together on these assignments, and occasionally received permission from the teacher to go down to the basement or behind the piano to learn their recitations. From arithmetic to memory work, then, there was usually something to do.

By 1957 there were only six grades at Metzler's School, with a total of approximately forty students. The majority of the students were Old Order Wenger Mennonites who used horses and buggies and who, as a rule, did not have electricity in their homes. Their family names included Hoover (four Hoover families), Oberholtzer, and Zimmerman. There were also two Horning Mennonite (black bumper) families whose last names were Martin and High. One Stauffer Mennonite family by the name of Brubaker attended the school, while one Amish family named King had children going there. Two families from Metzler's Mennonite Church (Lancaster Conference) named Horst and Horning (my family) also attended. These latter two families were the only two English-speaking families at the school. The remaining students all spoke Pennsylvania German at home, but despite the language differences we all managed to get along well in the classroom and on the playground.

Language did play a role, though, in how well students progressed with their schooling. Those first graders who spoke only the dialect at home had to learn a second language before good reading skills could be developed. Some of them had difficulty grasping English and were, not surprisingly, a little slower at moving ahead with their school work than classmates without similar problems. However, these dialect speakers eventually had the advantage of knowing two languages. Those of us who already knew English were

never forced to learn the second language to which we were exposed every day in school. (Maybe we were the losers in this case.) I should only speak for myself in this area — I learned enough so that I usually understood what was being said, but I lacked the nerve to make enough mistakes to truly learn to speak Pennsylvania German fluently. Perhaps another reason the dialect was not learned by the English-speaking students was because our teacher did not know it and did not encourage its use. But dialect or no dialect, we had an excellent teacher — Mrs. Annie H. Griffith.

Mrs. Griffith was my teacher for all of the six years I attended Metzler's School. She was a woman in her fifties with graying hair, a grandmotherly sort with an intelligence that we respected. Her long hair was pulled back and secured in a knot at the base of her neck, and the pins in it frequently needed rearranging — especially toward the end of the day. She was rather on the plump side and not in any way athletic, but she conducted her classes with an experienced hand; she had a lively sense of humor and rarely reacted angrily to the antics of the children she taught.

Mrs. Griffith knew something about a lot of subjects, and she was always willing to answer questions and share her knowledge. Moreover, she was always inclined to keep learning — in the early years of the space program she brought her television set to school so that we — and she — could see and hear about current events. She was adept at stimulating gifted students — giving special projects to the bored, and allowing older pupils to handle younger reading classes — and at finding extra time to spend with slower learners.

Discipline, too, was something Mrs. Griffith handled with seeming ease. The students were, for the most part, well-behaved, partially perhaps because of strict family discipline, but probably just as much because Mrs. Griffith was experienced at dealing with behavioral problems — she was fair and kind. One year when a student had a perfect attendance record until the last week of school and then missed a few days because of chicken pox, she received a prize anyway. I know; I was that student. I believe most people would agree that "the essential factor determining the failure or the successful functioning of any school is the teacher."<sup>7</sup> My personal experience bears that out: my years at Metzler's were rich ones because of Mrs. Griffith, and I do not regret my attendance there. I was the last child in my family who spent six years in a one-room school, for after the public school district sold the building to the Old Order Mennonites my younger brothers and sisters began attending larger public schools. Indeed, I now feel a certain pride when I look back at my years there, and at the years which followed when I continued my education and did rather well. But many of the children who attend Metzler's today will probably not go on to further schooling, and that is a whole other story.





*Student artwork decorates the walls much as it did in the author's time at Metzler's.*

### **METZLER'S SCHOOL TODAY**

As I approached Metzler's School in February, 1987, for a one day visit,<sup>8</sup> a wave of nostalgia overtook me when I thought of my own carefree elementary school days there. But this time instead of walking down the road I was driving, and when I parked I couldn't help but think my station wagon looked a little out of place next to the bicycles leaning against the school wall. I entered the school quietly and hung my coat next to the teacher's coat and bonnet. Then, just as quietly, I entered the classroom and was told to have a seat. My day of observation had begun.

As I sat down, the students were standing at the front of the room singing from the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal*.<sup>9</sup> While they sang "And When the Battle's Over," "My Heavenly Home," "In a Lonely Graveyard," and "Lead Me On," I took the opportunity to look around the room, and realized that very little had changed. Instead of the heat register where my generation used to stand on cold winter days, there were now small heat vents scattered around the outer edges of the room. Two bookcases were placed against the back wall, and in one I noticed a 1985 set of the *World Book Encyclopedia*. The teacher's desk was in the right front corner of the room, while at the left front was a dinette

table and six chairs; I later found out that this was used for classes that require table space. Conspicuously absent from the room was the piano; all the singing was done a cappella.

The walls of the room were decorated with student artwork just as they had been in years past. Indeed, even the dropped ceiling (that was new since my day) had artwork — hearts and snowmen — hanging from it. Completing the wall decorations were signs that exhorted and/or encouraged the reader: "Be quick to praise, slower to criticize"; "Only half right is always wrong"; "God is love"; "Every day is another chance to do a little better"; "Lend a hand: it feels good to help somebody"; and "Beauty is all around for those who choose to see it." The blackboard in the front of the room still occupied the entire width of the front wall, and just underneath it was a row of benches to help the smaller children when it was their turn to work at the board. There were six rows of six single desks, twenty-four of which were occupied. Each desk had an inkwell in the upper right corner; some students used it for trash, but no one used it for its intended purpose.

At recess and lunchtime there was very little interaction between the girls and the boys. The teacher had recently acquired a wood-cutting tool for the students to



use and it was very popular; the child traced a picture on a small piece of wood and then outlined the picture with the tool. Throughout the day many students took turns making their wood pictures. There was a great deal of snow on the ground, and boys who weren't using the wood-cutting tool spent their free time outdoors playing in it. The girls stayed inside and played "church"; the older girls were "mothers," the younger girls were their "children." The teacher mentioned that in good weather they still enjoy baseball, Rabbit Around, and Fox and Geese, just as earlier generations did.

Academically things had not changed much either. When possible, classes were still conducted with all grades simultaneously. After the morning singing, for example, there were penmanship lessons. While one class went to the blackboard to do their writing, the rest worked at their seats, using (and I couldn't help smiling at its incongruity) computer paper handed out for the purpose. Arithmetic followed; while first graders were reading their math book aloud, the teacher also intermittently gave assistance to a fifth grader working out a problem on the blackboard. (Also, seventh graders helped the teacher by checking first grade math books.) The last class before recess at 9:35 was recitation of memory work, and the first graders recited an interesting little poem about a pussycat which they wouldn't trade for "twenty loads of hay."

Throughout the rest of the school day there were reading, social studies, health, phonics, and spelling classes. During reading class, one grade stood at the front of the room, and students who did not know a word when it was their turn to read could be "trapped" by a classmate who then moved toward the head of the line. The reader in that position at the end of the session was rewarded with a sticker. Social studies classes were conducted at the blackboard. Each student was expected to have read his assignment, and class consisted of answering questions about what had been read. On the board students wrote "yes" or "no" and kept tab of right and wrong answers. These (and all the other) classes were frequently interrupted by students from different grades who had questions about their work; of course they always raised their hands for permission to speak. The older students (Metzler's again has eight grades) worked quite a bit on their own; instead of conducting class as such with them the teacher set a timer, and while it was running they did workbook assignments. As in my days at the school, students were expected to finish their work during the school day; there was no homework.

As I sat observing these children I was able to see actual physical resemblances to some of the very children with whom I had shared school times. Several looked so much like students I had known that I was not surprised to learn their names were Hoover, High, Oberholtzer, and Martin. Some of the names — Burkholder, Nolt,

Weaver — were different, but the same conservative religious groups were still represented (Horning, Wenger, and Stauffer Mennonites), and I was struck by how little the mode of dress of these groups had changed in the twenty-four years since I had left Metzler's. Although the children's outfits were not identical, it was obvious they all had standards which set boundaries on the way they were allowed to dress. Most of the boys, for instance, wore suspenders; only one did not. The girls all had long hair and most wore it in braids (one had a ponytail); all wore dresses — there were no skirts and blouses or pants.

Since these children are all from conservative Mennonite families, I was also not surprised to hear that they all speak Pennsylvania German. Their teacher, Miss Lydia Weaver, is herself a Wenger Mennonite and fluent in the dialect; this "should be an asset in the education of young students who come to school knowing little or no English."<sup>10</sup> When Miss Weaver told the children they had to use English in all their classes, she had trouble with some of the boys who wanted to use the dialect all of the time. So she compromised, saying they could use the dialect on Fridays if they spoke English the rest of the week. "That," she says, "helped a little." I didn't hear anyone speak Pennsylvania German when I was there, perhaps because it was a Tuesday.

Miss Weaver is in her third year of teaching at Metzler's School; she had previously taught at Diamond Run School, about a mile away. She seemed to have a good rapport with her students, and obviously had their respect for she ran an orderly classroom. Although no formal schooling beyond eighth grade has been required of her, she does receive the "Blackboard Bulletin,"<sup>11</sup> a monthly publication written for use by country schoolteachers. (It addresses discipline and behavior problems which confront teachers, and includes an interesting story which can be read to their students.) Miss Weaver is responsible to a board of directors (three men with children attending the school), and must make daily lesson plans and prepare report cards every six weeks.<sup>12</sup> I left Metzler's at the end of my visit with a new respect for the amount of planning and organization, and of patience and hard work, that make up a one-room schoolteacher's day.

## CONCLUSION

Metzler's School, then, continues to operate after more than a century of existence. During that time, many students have come and gone, and many teachers have done the same. But, although a few minor changes have been made in the building, classes there proceed in a fashion remarkably similar to that of fifty years ago. At that time the community-at-large found very strong arguments for the consolidation of rural schools: equalization of costs between poorer and wealthier



districts; better teachers; superior curricula; specialization of instruction and grading of pupils by age; social advantages to pupils and to the community; and better administration and superior vision.<sup>13</sup> As early as 1925, the authors of a report entitled *The Administration of Consolidated and Village Schools* recognized a grave danger in considering the special mission of the rural school to be that of keeping children on the farm.<sup>14</sup> It was their opinion that "education ought to broaden the horizon, not to limit it; [that] the rural school . . . should not only have more to educate with, but more to educate for."<sup>15</sup>

Arguments such as these failed to impress members of conservative religious groups for they are directly opposed to their beliefs and wishes. The Amish, for example, want their schools to help "the child to become a part of his community and [help him] to remain within his community."<sup>16</sup> For this reason, "Amish schools originated in response to [the] consolidation of public schools . . . In 1950 there were sixteen [Amish] schools and in 1970 over 300, with an estimated enrollment of 10,000 pupils."<sup>17</sup> In *Children in Amish Society*, authors John Hostetler and Gertrude Enders Huntington list the reasons the Amish establish and maintain these schools: 1) location — the school is close to their farms, and they want their children to continue farming; 2) the training and qualifications of the teacher — the Amish want "qualified teachers committed to Amish values"; 3) the number of years of schooling — any schooling beyond elementary school — should be conducive to the Amish way of life; 4) the content of education — the Amish want their children trained in the way of their religion, not in ways contrary to it.<sup>18</sup>

Still another factor was involved in this transition of public one-room schools to parochial one-room schools. In the 1940s, after the Great Depression, compulsory school attendance ages were raised to prevent young teenagers taking jobs from older workers. This posed a problem since Amish custom was to send their children to school to complete eighth grade and then have them return home to work on the farm. "Suddenly parents of 14-year-olds were faced with the decision about what to do with their pupils who had finished 8th grade but had not reached their 15th birthday."<sup>19</sup> One way of combating the problem was to keep children from starting first grade until they were seven.<sup>20</sup> But since the Amish do take a firm stand against public high school education,<sup>21</sup> this raising of the school age, along with their opposition to consolidation, further hastened the change from public to parochial one-room schools.

In considering the kind of education these parochial one-room schools provide, one can consider the following statement concerning the Amish to be fairly representative of the other conservative sects as well: "Amish schools prepare their children to be God-fearing, hardworking, and self-supporting persons.

They do not, however, teach them to be self-seeking, ambitious, and competitive."<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, "if children do leave the Amish community, their skills and ethics are a solid base for making a living."<sup>23</sup>

But when evaluating the success, or lack of it, of these parochial schools it is helpful to remember the reason for their existence: to preserve a unique lifestyle. It is difficult, if not nearly impossible, for an Amish child to go to high school and remain Amish; thus, the aforementioned strong stand taken against such further schooling.<sup>24</sup> As long as the parents of these children stop their education after eighth grade their boundaries are maintained; and, for the most part, that is what happens. From the point of view of those most closely concerned, then, these schools must be considered a success. From the point of view of the outsider, however, the verdict is not so simple. For those Amish and Mennonite children whose formal education consists of eight years attendance in a one-room school, the experience is not all loss: whether they continue in their own society or leave it for the larger society, they have learned valuable skills and lessons. But it must be added that neither is it all gain: many of these children undoubtedly have within them a great potential for further education; that potential cannot be realized fully when they are being taught by a teacher who has not gone beyond the eighth grade herself.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Iman Elsie Schatzmann, *The Country School* (Chicago, 1942), p. 138.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>4</sup>I visited with Mr. Zimmerman on March 14, 1987.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with Mary M. Hershey conducted on February 20, 1987, at her home at 4138 Old Philadelphia Pike, Gordonville, Pa.

<sup>6</sup>The students had songs written in little notebooks; one of these songs included the following: "We are climbing learning hill, march along. / Let the sluggish lag behind, march along."

<sup>7</sup>Schatzmann, p. 151.

<sup>8</sup>February 24, 1987.

<sup>9</sup>Published by the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa. It is still in use in some Mennonite churches today.

<sup>10</sup>Clyde S. Stine, "Problems of Education among the Pennsylvania Germans," Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, Ph.D. thesis, 1938.

<sup>11</sup>From Pathway Publishers, Alymer, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>12</sup>The grading system was posted on a sidewalk: 93-100, A; 86-92, B; 77-85, C; 70-76, D; less than 70, F. Their standards are as high or higher than their public school counterparts.

<sup>13</sup>John A. Hostetler and Gertrude Enders Huntington, *Children in Amish Society* (New York, 1971), p. 34.

<sup>14</sup>John C. Almack and James F. Bursch, *The Administration of Consolidated and Village Schools* (Boston, 1925), p. 4.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup>John A. Hostetler, *Amish Society* (Baltimore, 1980), p. 183.

<sup>17</sup>Hostetler and Huntington, p. 34.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>19</sup>Sarah E. Fisher and Rachel K. Stahl, *The Amish School* (Inter-course, Pa., 1986), p. 10.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>21</sup>Hostetler, p. 255.

<sup>22</sup>Fisher and Stahl, p. 88.

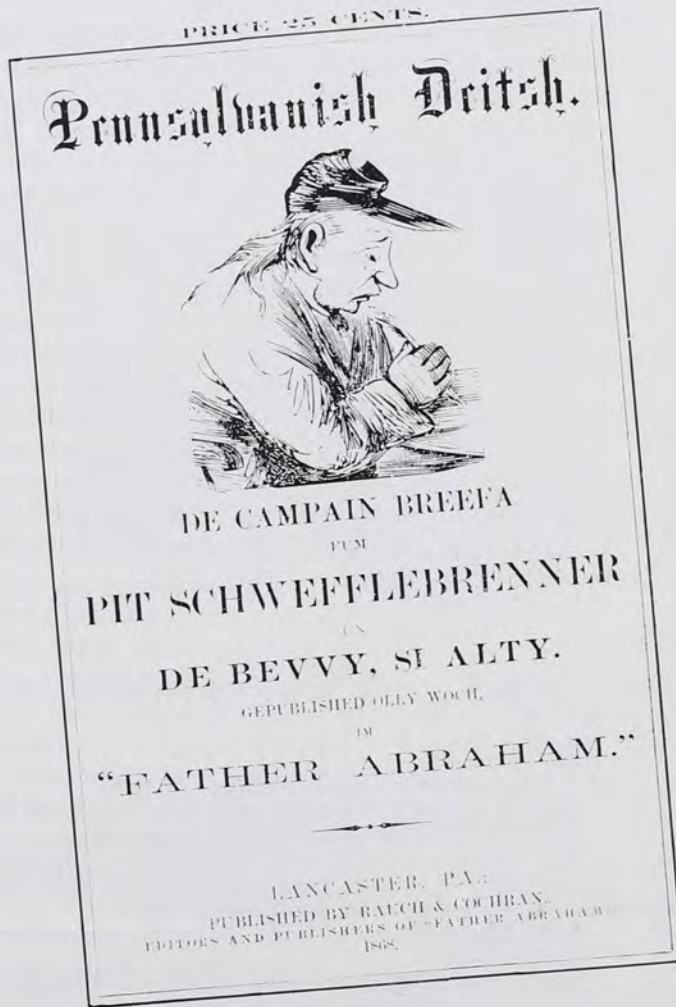
<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>24</sup>Fisher and Stahl (p. 88) as well as Hostetler, make this point.



# E. H. RAUCH'S FORMATIVE INFLUENCE ON PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN FOLK THEATER

by William Fetterman



*Edward H. Rauch is caricatured as a Civil War veteran and journalist on the cover of his "Pit SchwefflebreNNer" booklet. (Note that his pen name is spelled "SchwefflebreNNer" on his other publications depicted herein.)*

Edward Henry Rauch was born at Lititz, Pa. (Lancaster County) on July 19, 1820. In the late 1840s he became involved with clerical political jobs at Lancaster, entering journalism in 1850. During this period he was also involved in the Underground Railway, helping runaway slaves escape to Canada. During the Civil War, he formed a company of soldiers and served in the Washington, D.C., area. Through his later journalistic work in the city of Lancaster, in Bethlehem (Northampton County), and in Mauch Chunk (currently Jim Thorpe — Carbon County), Rauch became a popular and influential dialect writer and proponent of Pennsylvania German culture. He died September 8, 1902, at Mauch Chunk.<sup>1</sup>

Rauch's initial popularity was with his newspaper columns written as humorous "letters-to-the-editor" under the pen name "Pit SchwefflebreNNer" (Pete Sulphurburner) during the 1860s.<sup>2</sup> In 1873 he wrote and edited *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*, a monthly dialect magazine that foundered after three issues, and in 1879 he issued his *Pennsylvania Dutch Hand-Book*. His last major dialect publication was his translation of the play *Rip Van Winkle* in 1883. It is from Rauch's magazine, hand-book, and play that one sees the first fully conscious attempts at formally initiating the Pennsylvania German folk theater movement which continues to the present.

*Rip Van Winkle* was originally published by Rauch in



# PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH RIP VAN WINKLE

A ROMANTIC DRAMA IN TWO ACTS

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL WITH VARIATIONS.

BY E. H. RAUCH  
("PIT SCHWEEFELBRENNER.")

MAUCH CHUNG, PA.:  
E. H. RAUCH, PUBLISHER.  
MAUCH CHUNG DEMOCRAT STEAM PRINT.  
1883.

[RIP VAN WINKLE.]

coat and belt, full brown breeches  
and dress.—Same, but much worn

—Brown square cut coat, vest  
and dress.—Black coat,

cut coat, full breeches, black  
dress.

and dress.—Black frock coat,

vests, breeches, &c.

shoes.

vest, large gray pants.

vest dress.

cap.

skirt, figured petticoat.

art, &c.

black ribbon belt, &c.

Entrance, Right. S.  
and Entrance, Right.  
Centre. T. E. L.  
Left. C. D.  
Left. U. D. L.

acing the Audi-

## RIP VAN WINKLE

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A Village.—House, L. H. 3 E., with a sign of "George  
Hill."—Two or three tables, C. L. and R.—Villagers discovered,  
smoking.—VEDDER, R., KNICKERBOCKER, L. C., RORY, L., CLAUSIN  
at tea table.—Chorus at rising of curtain.

CHORUS.

In our native land, where flows the Rhine,  
In infancy we culled the vine:  
Although we toiled with patient care.

SOLO.

Till tempting waves, with anxious toil,  
We landed on Columbia's soil;  
Now plenty, all our cares repay,  
So laugh and dance the hours away.

CHORUS.

Now plenty all our cares repay,  
So laugh and dance the hours away;  
Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!  
So laugh and dance the hours away.

Vedd. Sawg, du, Clausin, we'd uf 'm waig warsht, husht ebbas  
fun unserm freind Rip Van Winkle g'sana? Wo ebbas os we olter  
whiskey tzu hawa is bin ich goot derfore os ar sure is um der waig  
tzu si—olsfort im dorst!

Knick. Du besser gebst aucht wass du sawgsht. Ennicher  
mon os 'm 'a goota glaws whiskey ous 'm waig gait is 'n norr. Sell  
is my plainy Deitshe mainung. Awer ich sawg der, mauch kae  
fun fun Rip, for ich exhspect amohl ains fun denna dawg mich  
aw tzu shlees on si fomelia, un ich nem satisfaction ous ennich  
ame os 'n insult.

Vedd. So so. Dennoch husht di mind uf gamaucht 'm Rip si  
shaney shweshter tzu hira?

Knick. Sell is exactly wass ich im sin hob tzu du. Der Rip is  
's agreed; de Alice is 's agreed un ich bin 's agreed.

Clau. Bisht awer aw now sure os du de Ripsy, 'm Rip is fraw, uf  
diner side husht? Is se 's aw agreed?

Knick. Sell is de ainsich bodderation. Denk yusht we se fun  
weaga meer shwetzt. Se sawgt ich bin nix os 'n long bainich,  
slop-orrich, dobbich, ouslendish 's creddoor!

1883, and is republished in the standard dialect plays anthology.<sup>3</sup> Previous scholars have identified this as a dramatization and adaptation of Washington Irving's story, but Rauch's play must be more clearly identified as a Pennsylvania German dialect translation from the American (English-language) play by Charles Burke (based on the Washington Irving story) which was first performed at the Arch Street Theatre in Philadelphia in 1850.<sup>4</sup> Rauch's dialect version follows Burke's text almost line-for-line. If Rauch's version may not be judged to be an imaginative translation, the dialect *Rip* proved to be popular until the early 1900s. The first recorded performance of Rauch's Pennsylvania German *Rip Van Winkle* was at Allentown, Pa. (Lehigh County), in 1884.<sup>5</sup>

Of this play, Reichard writes: "The drama is well adapted to local town halls, where it is intended to be, and was, performed. It is boisterous and tumultuous, but we do not expect anything altogether refined in the home of the old sot Rip, nor in a play which, as far as the first act was concerned, might well be construed as a horrible example to illustrate Rauch's own temperance lecture."<sup>6</sup> Although Rauch's *Rip Van Winkle* is con-

sidered to be a Pennsylvania German folk play, it is difficult to reconcile this play with Reichard's abstract definition of a folk play as being "a scene from contemporary life, characters indigenous, playwright, a native of the region, people, his own people . . . concerned with the legends, superstitions, customs, environmental differences and vernacular of the common people . . ."

Here is a play that, aside from being in the dialect, has very little direct relationship to the Pennsylvania Germans as a unique sector of American society. Rip is a Holland-Dutchman from the State of New York, *not* a "Pennsylvania Dutchman" from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Here is a literary and theatrical model *not* derived from the everyday experiences of ordinary people. With *Rip Van Winkle*, Rauch proposes using the general, popular theatrical forms of professional American theater as the basis for creating a "Pennsylvania German Folk Play." From the 1880s through the 1980s, the great majority of Pennsylvania German dialect plays have been, and continue to be, modeled on *Rip Van Winkle* and the larger tradition of nineteenth-century farces involving stereotyped characters intended to generate audience laughter, and little else.





Joseph Jefferson portrays the young *Rip Van Winkle*.  
(Joseph Jefferson: *Reminiscences of a Fellow Player*, p. 36.)

Rauch's choice of *Rip Van Winkle* did initially have an authenticity and immediateness for his audience in the 1880s, however. No doubt Rauch was motivated to make *Rip Van Winkle* into a dialect play as a result of Gilbert and Sullivan's *H. M. S. Pinafore* being turned into a Pennsylvania German burlesque by Alfred Charles Moss and Elwood L. Newhard in 1882.<sup>8</sup> The Moss and Newhard *Pinafore* might appear totally bizarre within Reichard's definition of what constitutes a "Pennsylvania German Folk Play," yet this operetta would be frequently performed in the Allentown area until about 1910, and there are many people today who would like to see it performed again. (While I believe it is more important to encourage new work in contemporary productions, a revival of either *Pinafore* or *Rip Van Winkle* would be a welcome addition to the current repertoire.)

Rauch's choice of *Rip Van Winkle* as a response to the Pennsylvania German dialect *Pinafore* reveals the

popular taste of American audiences during the period. Several actors had attempted various stage dramatizations of Washington Irving's story after 1829, but it was Joseph Jefferson (1829-1905) who made the role his own. Jefferson, a half-brother of Charles Burke, realized the potential of the part; he would portray his own version of *Rip Van Winkle* from 1865 until 1904.<sup>9</sup> Jefferson became a highly respected actor, playing Rip throughout America, as well as in England and Australia. Rip became identified, through Jefferson's portrayal, as the greatest expression of regional American character on the stage during this era.

Jefferson was undoubtedly well-known by the Pennsylvania German theater-goer of the 1880s. Jefferson's biographer, Francis Wilson, relates this anecdote:

He told me of once acting Rip in Easton, Pennsylvania. The curtain had just fallen on the final act of the play, and he was making for his dressing room, when he was clapped familiarly on the back by a lout of a stage hand, who bawled:





*Joseph Jefferson as old Rip Van Winkle. (Joseph Jefferson: Reminiscences of a Fellow Player, p. 24.)*

"Joe, you done well!"

"Why, what did you say to him?" I asked.

"I was astonished, of course, and then amused, so I simply said: 'Do you think so? When we are here again, come to see us.' And he replied, 'Bet your life I will.'" <sup>10</sup>

It is our loss that Rauch had to use the inferior dramatization by Charles Burke for his dialect translation, as Jefferson's version would not be published until 1895.<sup>11</sup>

But if I judge Rauch's *Rip Van Winkle* (and the later plays that have followed within this tradition) as an inferior realization of Reichard's definition of the true Pennsylvania German folk theater, Rauch has yet other genres of dramatic dialect writings which may still provide more challengingly alternative — yet historically traditional — models for that theater. His translations of scenes from Shakespeare's plays, for instance, have been largely forgotten, but initially they were very

popular.

In the first issue of Rauch's magazine, *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*, for example, there appears his translation of the scene from *Hamlet* (I,v) where Hamlet's father's ghost appears and tells Hamlet to avenge his (the father's) murder.<sup>12</sup> (This January, 1873, version of *Hamlet*, I,v, was reprinted in bilingual Pennsylvania German and English texts in *Aus Pennsylvania: An Anthology of Translations into the Pennsylvania German Dialect*.<sup>13</sup>) A different version of this scene — along with the scene from *Julius Caesar* (III,ii) where Brutus and Mark Antony eulogize the slain leader, and selections from *Richard III* (I,i; and V, iv) — appears in the *Pennsylvania Dutch Hand-Book*.<sup>14</sup> This second, 1879, version of *Hamlet*, I,v, was also reprinted in the second through fourth editions of *Horne's Pennsylvania German Manual*,<sup>15</sup> and all three of the 1879 Shakespeare translations appear in the standard dialect plays anthology.<sup>16</sup>





"ICH BIN DEI DAWDY SI SHPOOK".

I AM YOUR FATHER'S GHOST.

*Rauch's translation of Hamlet, I,v, appeared in the first issue of the Pennsylvania Dutchman; it was very popular with his contemporaries. (Horne's Pennsylvania German Manual, 3rd. ed., p. 123.)*

The most popular of these Shakespeare translations was the scene from *Hamlet*. As late as 1942 Reichard would write that Rauch's Pennsylvania German dialect *Hamlet*, "... made in the spirit of burlesque, has been presented very effectively many times by dramatic organizations. I myself produced it with and for college students [Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa.] and other groups, and can vouch for its merits as a fun producer wherever both the Pennsylvania German and Shakespeare are known."<sup>17</sup>

The most recent performance of Rauch's *Hamlet* (the 1873 version), and probably the first since Reichard's time, was given on September 24 and 25, 1983, near Allentown. The late Reverend Willard Weida played "der Schpook" (the ghost), and I played Hamlet. Surprisingly, neither performance was popular with the audience. While in Reichard's time it may have been a "fun producer," the 1983 Pennsylvania German audience did not find this to be at all amusing. Much of the language and vocabulary consisted of either pur-

posefully literary constructions or now-unfamiliar words, which made the scene seem to be "above people's heads" and totally alien to Pennsylvania German folk culture.

Times change. Conceptions of what is "traditional" or "acceptable" within a culture also change. For Rauch, in the 1870s, the humor in these Shakespeare scenes rests in the supposed improbability of a Pennsylvania German speaking formal, literary language. To hear Richard III cry, "'N gowl! 'N gowl! my kanichreich for 'n gowl" (My horse! My horse! My kingdom for a horse) becomes a trivialization of educated, formal (and, yes, urban) English-language and upper-class general American culture, in the process also treating the dialect as part of an essentially simple-minded and humorous (i.e., laughable) culture.

It must be mentioned, however, that for the contemporary dialect speaker (excepting, of course, those who belong to the Plain religious sects), Pennsylvania German is now perceived as being essentially humorous in



itself, regardless of what is being said. When one encounters a group of people conversing in the dialect, one often hears much laughter; it is for this reason the dialect is being used. It is also because of this social trend that increasingly sentimental and nostalgic comedies — reminiscent of latter-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century farces — have become the mainstay of contemporary dialect stage plays.

Although his translations of Shakespeare have not had a major effect on the historical development of Pennsylvania German folk theater, one might say that Rauch — with these self-consciously literary and artistic dramatic fragments — and Eli Keller — with his 1867 verse tri-logue, “Mer Wolle Fische Geh,” (Wanting to go Fishing) — initiated the somewhat obscure genre of Pennsylvania German dialect verse plays.<sup>18</sup> An almost complete list of these would include Ralph Schlosser’s translation of Act V from Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, performed in 1931;<sup>19</sup> Edwin C. Miller’s unperformed skit, “Der Bauer un der Jaeger” (“The Farmer and the Hunter”);<sup>20</sup> Preston A. Barba’s dramatization of Astor Wuchter’s long poem, *An Der Lumba Parti (At the Rag-Carpet Party)*, performed in 1933;<sup>21</sup> John Birmelin’s “Die Retscherei” (“The Gossiping”), published in 1938, but not performed until 1983;<sup>22</sup> Irene Master’s *Em Doctor Eisabond, Sei Satchel (Doctor Iron-beard’s Satchel)*, unpublished, but performed in 1941;<sup>23</sup> Milt Blatt’s, “Es Heirt Leewe” (“Married Life”), unpublished, but performed in 1946;<sup>24</sup> Richard P. Middleton’s *Der Narrschmidt (The Smith-Fool)* from 1983, unperformed but later published;<sup>25</sup> Ernest W. Bechtel’s *Der Dichter un der Artist (The Poet and the Artist)* from 1983, unperformed but later published;<sup>26</sup> my own *Em Yockli, Sei Haus (The House That Jack Built)* also from 1983, and also unperformed but later published;<sup>27</sup> and Peter V. Fritsch’s *Mommi, Du Mer Tzugar Nei (Mommy, Put More Sugar In)* from 1986, as yet unperformed and unpublished.<sup>28</sup>

The genre of dialect verse plays is generally unknown by most contemporary playwrights, actors, and audiences. If such plays are a departure from the typical nostalgic comedies, the fact is they do present a tradition-based alternative to this mainstream fare, and is all the more reason why they are of great contemporary value. Middleton’s verse play, for example, extends the tradition of oral joke dialogues such as “Hons, Woo Gat D’r Wak Nous?”; Bechtel’s play extends the early nineteenth century literary, moral, and didactic dialogues found in pieces from the Moravian Girl’s School at Bethlehem (c. 1790-1827); Fritsch’s play combines the oral dialogue song-form with dance, pantomime, and games; and my own play is influenced by games and nursery rhymes.<sup>29</sup>

Another genre of playwriting initiated by Rauch is the topical political play. His two examples appear in the first issue of his magazine *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*.

“Der Freedmen’s Bureau” concerns two Pennsylvania Germans in a fictitious, 1869 conversation about then-president Andrew Johnson’s reconstructionist policies toward the newly-emancipated Black slaves.<sup>30</sup> (Such material was also popular White minstrel show political commentary during the late 1860s and early 1870s.<sup>31</sup>) Rauch’s material is controversial for the contemporary reader, for one might say that his dialogue contains latent prejudice and hostility toward Blacks and their status within the larger American society. One might conversely say that Rauch’s dialogue is ironic in tone, being less a condemnation of Blacks than a self-satire of Pennsylvania German attitudes toward the work ethic.

Rauch’s second political dialogue, “Anno Domini 1973,” is his only dialogue written in English.<sup>32</sup> In it, two Pennsylvanians, one of Scotch-Irish and one of German descent, talk about the world of the future. They believe that in one hundred years women will have attained full social and political rights; that insanity and alcohol abuse will have been eliminated; that war will have been abolished, and the planet will be a global village of peaceful-coexistence, rapid communication, and air travel. Sadly, from our 1980s perspective, many of these 1870s Utopian ideals have not yet been realized. In terms of Pennsylvania German folk culture, however, “Anno Domini 1973” is accurately prophetic of changes that have occurred within that community in the last hundred years. As mentioned, the conversation takes place in English, and one might interpret this as a prophecy that Pennsylvania Germans would ultimately lose their dialect, their rural life-style, and, indeed, all of the attributes that make them a distinct American subculture. And, while this may seem less obvious among the “Plain People” (Amish and Old-Order Mennonite) than the “Gay Dutch” (Lutheran and Reformed), it must be said that such deteriorizations have occurred among *all* contemporary Pennsylvania German groups.

Very few Pennsylvania German dialect political plays have appeared since Rauch’s time. An almost-complete list would include Thomas Brendle’s *Di Hoffning (Hope)* written about 1935-36 but apparently unperformed; John Kohl’s *En Inside Chop (An Inside Job)* performed in 1941 but unpublished; Julius Lentz’s *Sie Funga Dar Hitler (They Find Hitler)* performed in 1946, but unpublished; Ernest Bechtel’s *Schalle Fun Freiheit (Echoes of Freedom)* performed and published in 1976; and untitled skits by Ernest Kistler performed but unpublished. Kistler’s 1976 skit is a satire of Presidential candidates Ronald Reagan, George Wallace, Hubert Humphrey, and then-President Ford; Kistler’s 1980 skit satirized the “Arabian Oil Crisis” with the Pennsylvania German “solution” being to ride a bicycle!<sup>33</sup>

While I do not advocate that folk theater should be a political forum, such plays do have a noticeable difference in approach when compared with the typical







nected, floating sentences without the cause-and-effect relationships of conversation. By the middle of page 176, however, Rauch begins to use his practical sentences in a more interconnected and conversational manner:

He died last night.  
*Ar is de letsht naucht g'shtorwa.*  
 I was there myself.  
*Ich war selwer dort.*  
 I can't stand that.  
*Ich con sell net shtanda.*  
 I know nothing more.  
*Ich wais nix mai.*  
 On the other side.  
*Uf der onner side.*  
 That is what I said.  
*Sell is wass ich g'sawt hob.*  
 Where are you going?  
*Wo gaesht hee?*  
 Mind your own business.  
*Mind di eagny bisness.*  
 That is a very fine house down on the corner.  
*Sell is an orrick fines house droona uf'm eck.*  
 That is what the old lady told me yesterday.  
*Sell is wass de olt fraw mer g'sawt hut geshter.*  
 Now would be a good time to invest in land.  
*Now waer 'n gooty tzeit for in land tzu investa.*  
 Better wait until property gets cheaper.  
*Besser wardsht bis property wulfeller waerd.*

Clearly, Rauch has moved in these "practical exercises" from unconnected statements to conversational patterns. Although he does not typographically designate this as such, from the previously quoted line above, Rauch concludes this section of the *Hand-Book* with sentence practice — in effect dialogues — about such typical everyday events as buying butter; seeing a suspicious-looking stranger; taking a sleigh ride; discussing an election, crop prospects, and the news of Tom Jones' death; buying coal; and criticizing the new minister.

Taking together these informally designated "practical exercises" dialogues with the formally designated "business talk" dialogues, one sees for the first time in Pennsylvania German dramatic writing the beginnings of a more-or-less complete theatrical expression of everyday vernacular life. The informal dialogues might be said to be illustrative of rural and village life, while the business dialogues might be said to be illustrative of urban life in predominately Pennsylvania German cities such as Allentown, Reading, or Lancaster. Taken together as a genre, then, these dialogues by Rauch provide the first coherent picture of Pennsylvania German folklife expressed through dramatic writing in the dialect. It is these dialogues which most satisfactorily realize Reichard's definition of Pennsylvania German

folk theater being "a scene from contemporary life, characters indigenous, playwright, a native of the region, people, his own people; . . . concerned with the legends, superstitions, customs, environmental differences and the vernacular of the common people."

Rauch's form of dialogue as typical conversation between two persons would ultimately find its greatest and most mature expression in Clarence Rahn's scripts for the weekly radio program *Asseba un Sabina Mumbauer Im Eihladaahl* (*Asseba and Sabina Mumbauer of Owl-Valley*), broadcast over WSAZ, Allentown, from January 1944 through June 1954. It is true that Rauch's dialogues are only a few lines, while Rahn's are fully thought-out fifteen-minute skits; and it is also true that Rauch's dialogues do not have the depth of character development, or the completeness of documenting traditional calendrical events and seasonal situations as occurs in Rahn's later plays; yet Rauch's dialogues should not be slighted. For, although his dialogues were not written for actual performance (and, indeed, I have not found any instance of their ever having been performed), Rauch remains historically important as the first dialect writer to systematically experiment with the emerging form of Pennsylvania German folk theater.

What distinguishes Rauch's 1870s dialogues from 1980s dialect stage plays is the tone of voice. Rauch's dialogues are mostly matter-of-fact in content, with very few forays into humor. What *is* humorous is the self-identification of Pennsylvania German character and life that these dialogues provide for the Pennsylvania German audience. In contrast, the 1980s dialect stage play is preconceived as being a comic and nostalgic farce referring to the early twentieth century, and having no connection with everyday life and experience. Even during the 1940s, when Pennsylvania German folk theater was at its height, Earl Robacker would write: "As they now exist, these Pennsylvania German plays are more a vehicle for the dialect than for the ideas they convey. They are designed first of all for entertainment, and the language is a major part of the entertainment. Whether a deeper drama is to emerge from the fun and frolic of these light offerings remains to be seen."<sup>9</sup>

In summary, Rauch's *Rip Van Winkle* has become the model for the majority of Pennsylvania German dialect plays since the 1880s; his translations of Shakespeare have had only a marginal influence, and the same may be said of his topical and political dialogues. Moreover, his dialogues concerning purposefully undramatic (yet perhaps more authentic?) everyday-life experiences and conversational patterns have been ignored by scholars, playwrights, actors, and audiences. But I believe these brief and unpretentious everyday-life dialogues are of decisive value, not only as historical documents of Pennsylvania German folklife, but also as an alternative (though traditional) model for Pennsylvania German folk theater in our own time.



For here is a form of dramatic writing which is very simple, but which need not be simplistic. Here is a "drama" which does not use the professional theater as the basis from which to model and make a "folk play," but instead uses life itself as theater. Such writing mirrors and documents real-life conversations without the preconceived notion that "a play" situation should be humorous. Indeed, here is drama which does not even presuppose that "theater" should necessarily be "theatrical." The brevity of these dialogues certainly finds precedent in the oral performance tradition of dialogue jokes such as "Der Paul Revere."

Throughout this essay I have taken a sometimes

negative, sometimes positive, critical viewpoint; however, I do enjoy folk theater in all its aspects, and offer criticism in order to beautify, not to mar. For among the Pennsylvania Germans, dialect folk theater is an extremely rich tradition that has been proven capable of profound artistic and social expression. While this essay has taken a rather reductive approach, and while Pennsylvania German folk theater certainly has many voices, the work of E. H. Rauch not only provides us with a historical model for varieties of dialect theatrical expression, it also asks us to question and rethink what one means by "Pennsylvania German folk theater" in the first place.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Harry Hess Reichard, *Pennsylvania German Dialect Writings and their Writers* (Lancaster, Pa.: The Pennsylvania German Society, 1918), pp. 74-76; and Albert F. Buffington, ed., *The Reichard Collection of Early Pennsylvania German Dialogues and Plays* (Lancaster, Pa.: The Pennsylvania German Society, 1962), pp. 42-43.

<sup>2</sup>E. H. Rauch, *De Campain Breefa fum Pit Schweffelbrenner un de Bevy, Si Alty* (Lancaster, Pa.: Rauch & Cochran, 1868).

<sup>3</sup>Albert F. Buffington, *The Reichard Collection of Early Pennsylvania German Dialogues and Plays*, pp. 53-91.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Burke, *Rip Van Winkle, A Legend of the Catskills: A Romantic Drama in Two Acts* (New York: Samuel French, c. 1857).

<sup>5</sup>Albert F. Buffington, *The Reichard Collection of Early Pennsylvania German Dialogues and Plays*, pp. 44-47.

<sup>6</sup>Harry Hess Reichard, "Pennsylvania German Literature," pp. 165-244 in *The Pennsylvania Germans*, Ralph Wood, ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1942), pp. 182-183.

<sup>7</sup>Harry Hess Reichard, "Introduction to Clarence Iobst's *En Quart Millich un en Halb Beint Rahm*" (Allentown, Pa.: The Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 1939), p. 19. Although Reichard takes his definition from Frederick H. Koch's work with the Carolina Playmakers during the 1920s and 1930s, Reichard's persuasiveness allows the definition to be serviceable also within Pennsylvania German folk theater.

<sup>8</sup>Albert F. Buffington, *The Reichard Collection of Early Pennsylvania German Dialogues and Plays*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>9</sup>Stephen Johnson, "Joseph Jefferson's *Rip Van Winkle*," in *The Drama Review* Vol. 26, No. 1 (Spring 1982), p. 5.

<sup>10</sup>Francis Wilson, *Joseph Jefferson: Reminiscences of a Fellow Player* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), pp. 30-31.

<sup>11</sup>Joseph Jefferson, *Rip Van Winkle, As Played By Joseph Jefferson* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1895).

<sup>12</sup>E. H. Rauch, in *The Pennsylvania Dutchman* Vol. I, No. 1, (January 1873), pp. 7-8.

<sup>13</sup>William S. Troxell, ed., *Aus Pennsylvawnia: An Anthology of Translations into the Pennsylvania German Dialect* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1938), pp. 22-27.

<sup>14</sup>E. H. Rauch, *Rauch's Pennsylvania Dutch Hand-Book* (Mauch Chunk, Pa.: E. H. Rauch, 1879), pp. 218-222.

<sup>15</sup>A. R. Horne, ed., *Horne's Pennsylvania German Manual* (Allentown, Pa.: National Educator, 1896 [second edition]), pp. 97-100; *Horne's Pennsylvania German Manual* (Allentown, Pa.: T. K. Horne, 1905 [third edition]), pp. 121-125; and *Horne's Pennsylvania German Manual* (Allentown, Pa.: T. K. Horne, 1910 [fourth edition]), pp. 152-157.

<sup>16</sup>Albert F. Buffington, *The Reichard Collection of Early Pennsylvania German Dialogues and Plays*, pp. 91-96.

<sup>17</sup>Harry Hess Reichard, "Pennsylvania German Literature" in *The Pennsylvania Germans*, p. 182.

<sup>18</sup>Harry Hess Reichard, ed., *Pennsylvania German Verse* (Norristown, Pa.: The Pennsylvania German Society, 1940), pp. 150-151.

<sup>19</sup>Harry Hess Reichard, *Pennsylvania German Verse*, pp. 234-238.

<sup>20</sup>Edwin C. Miller, *Miller's Prose and Verse* (Allentown, Pa.: Searle & Bachman Co., 1924), pp. 72-82.

<sup>21</sup>Albert F. Buffington, *The Reichard Collection of Early Pennsylvania German Dialogues and Plays*, pp. 353-370.

<sup>22</sup>John Birmelin, *Gezwitscher: A Book of Pennsylvania German Verse* (Allentown, Pa.: The Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 1938), pp. 56-58.

<sup>23</sup>This play appears in the Reichard Collection of unpublished playscripts housed in the Pennsylvania German Archives of Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pa.

<sup>24</sup>Author's collection of Pennsylvania German theatrical materials.

<sup>25</sup>Richard P. Middleton, "Der Narrschmidt," in *Da Ausauga* Vol. 25, No. 2, Spring 1985.

<sup>26</sup>Ernest W. Bechtel, "Der Dichter un der Artist," in *Da Ausauga* Vol. 25, No. 3, Summer 1985.

<sup>27</sup>William Fetterman, "Em Yockli, Sei Haus," in *Da Ausauga* Vol. 25, No. 1, Winter 1985.

<sup>28</sup>Peter V. Fritsch, "Mommi, Du Mer Tzugar Nei," in *Da Ausauga* Vol. 28, No. 1, Winter 1988.

<sup>29</sup>For more background on these traditional genres of folk performance see William Fetterman, "A Brief Historical Appreciation of Contemporary Pennsylvania German Folk Theater," in *Der Reggebo* Vol. 22, No. 1, Spring 1988, pp. 15-32.

<sup>30</sup>E. H. Rauch, *The Pennsylvania Dutchman* Vol. I, No. 1, January 1873, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup>Robert C. Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 126.

<sup>32</sup>E. H. Rauch, *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*, January 1873, pp. 16-18.

<sup>33</sup>Brendle's play appears in *The Reichard Collection of Early Pennsylvania German Dialogues and Plays*, pp. 223-253; the plays by Kohl and Lentz appear in the Reichard Collection of Pennsylvania German materials in the Pennsylvania German Archive of Muhlenberg College; Bechtel's play was published by the Pennsylvania German Society in a small edition c. 1976; skits by Ernest Kistler are in the author's collection. For more social/aesthetic context see William Fetterman, "A Brief Historical Appreciation of Contemporary Pennsylvania German Folk Theater," pp. 19-21.

<sup>34</sup>E. H. Rauch, *Rauch's Pennsylvania Dutch Hand-Book*, pp. iii-v.

<sup>35</sup>See Reichard's *Pennsylvania-German Dialect Writings and their Writers*, p. 82; Reichard's "Pennsylvania German Literature," p. 182; and Buffington's *The Reichard Collection of Early Pennsylvania German Dialogues and Plays*, p. 43.

<sup>36</sup>See *Horne's Pennsylvania German Manual*, second edition pp. 100-101; third edition pp. 124-125; fourth edition pp. 156-157.

<sup>37</sup>E. H. Rauch, *Pennsylvania Dutch Hand-Book*, pp. 185-207.

<sup>38</sup>E. H. Rauch, *Pennsylvania Dutch Hand-Book*, pp. 174-184.

<sup>39</sup>Earl F. Robacher, *Pennsylvania German Literature: Changing Trends from 1683-1942* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1942), p. 160.



# GERMANIC ORIGINS AND RELIGIOUS-GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF THE MENNONITES IN EUROPE

by Lee C. Hopple

This is the fifth in a series of articles examining the European religious and spatial experiences of one of the original Pennsylvania German Plain sects which has been published in this periodical. Of these five studies this, concerning the Mennonites, is the most wide-ranging in time and space, and involves the largest population — a population which traces its origins to the Anabaptist<sup>1</sup> movement in the Germanic regions of Switzerland in the 1520s. The Mennonite faith spread from there to the Netherlands in the 1530s, and then gradually dispersed across Europe, Russia, and Western Siberia;<sup>2</sup> today Mennonites are the only major Anabaptist Plain German sect remaining in Europe in substantial numbers.

The three above-mentioned factors — time, space, and population — strongly influenced the organizational pattern of this study which is comprised of two parts. The first briefly reviews the origins of the

Anabaptist movement in Switzerland to the founding of the Mennonites in the Netherlands; the second is subdivided into five chronological units which examine the religious-spatial experiences of the Mennonites in Europe and Russia from the 1530s to the present. The European and Russian Mennonites are discussed separately throughout this investigation because of their differing religious and secular experiences.

This work has been hindered by several factors: Mennonite demographic data is either unavailable or unreliable for the first two centuries included in this study; and the supply of information emanating from the U.S.S.R is rather meager. Also, some relevant information has no doubt escaped the author's attention, and some was simply unavailable to him. Despite these and other handicaps, the religious and geographical history of the Mennonites in Europe is summarized below.<sup>3</sup>

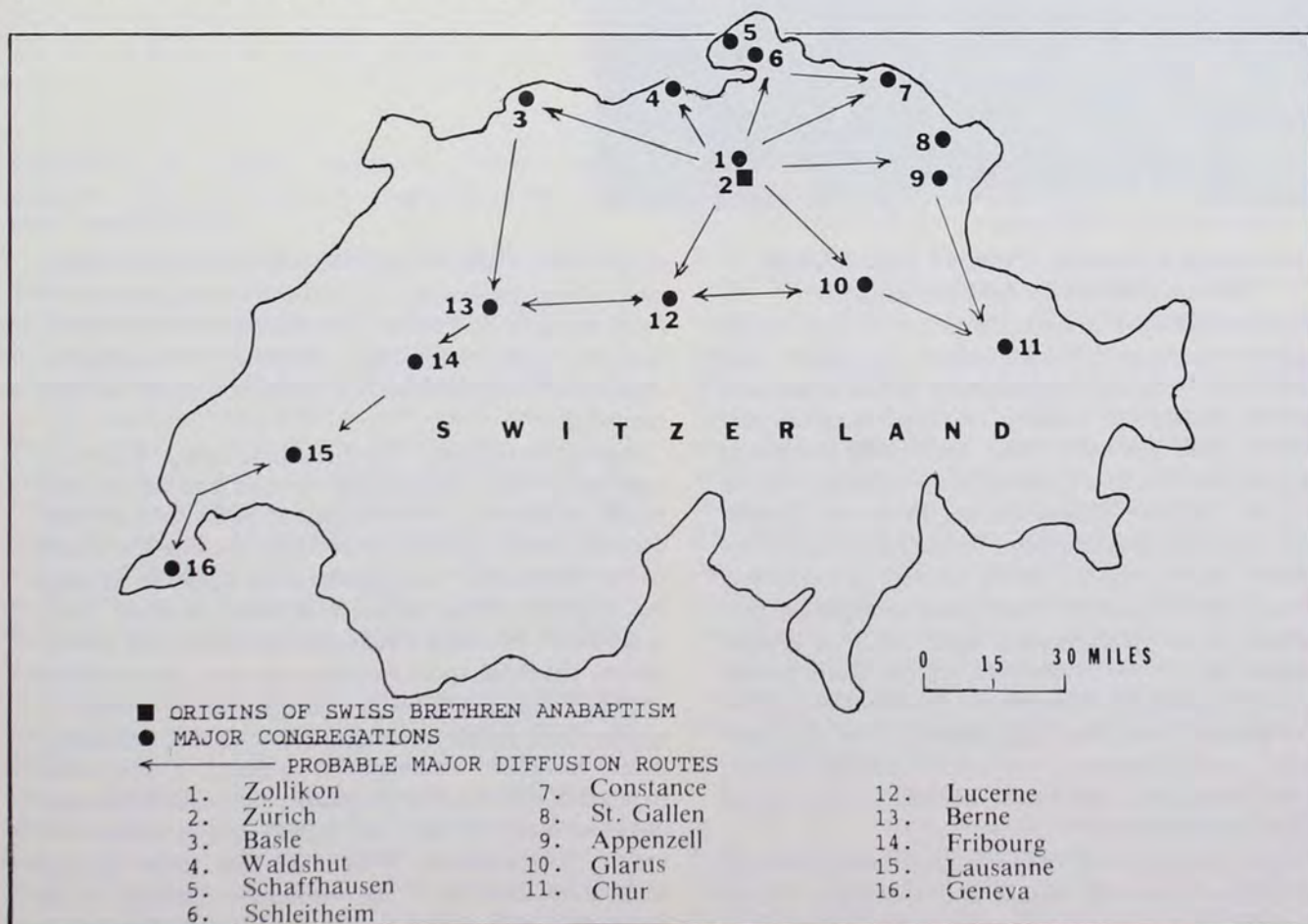
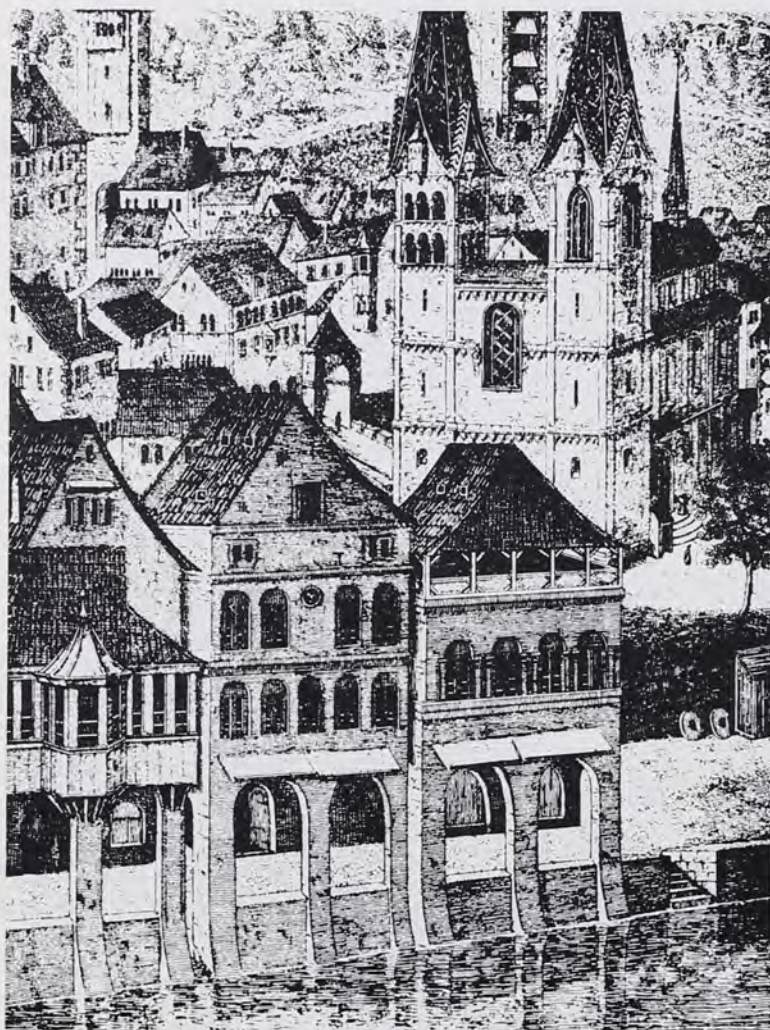


FIGURE 1: THE BRETHREN IN SWITZERLAND, 1525-1540.





*Zürich in the sixteenth century; the Anabaptist Reformation was established in 1525 at Zollikon, a town just outside the city. (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 63.)*

### RELIGIOUS-GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGINS OF ANABAPTISM IN SWITZERLAND

The Protestant Reformation consisted of three major religious movements: Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anabaptism.<sup>4</sup> The term Anabaptism means rebaptism<sup>5</sup> (believers denied the validity of infant baptism and practiced adult baptism), and is technically defined as religious primitivism — a desire for the restitution of the Apostolic Church.<sup>6</sup> (Many leading Protestant theologians, preachers, and scholars believed restitution of the primitive Church was the central concept of the Reformation.<sup>7</sup>) Although in the larger sense the principal personalities of the Reformation were religious revolutionaries, within the framework of the Reformation they were exceedingly conservative, cautious men striving to preserve what they had created. Thus they proclaimed restitutionism an extremely radical concept, and the Anabaptist movement became known as the "Radical Reformation."<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately for restitutionism, its many exponents were widely dispersed across the Germanic states. Moreover, they were not in agreement regarding a precise set of tenets, or a procedure for restoring the an-

cient Church; and, because of their geographic dispersion, it was not possible to convene for the purpose of resolving their differences, developing policies and procedures, and establishing doctrine. Consequently, Anabaptism commenced in a rather confusing, unclear manner.<sup>9</sup>

Many prominent restitutionists did, however, gradually move to Germanic Switzerland where they joined forces with the distinguished Swiss restitutionist, Conrad Grebel. Grebel (1498-1526) became the leader of the movement,<sup>10</sup> and Anabaptism began to develop unity, clarity, cohesiveness, and distinctiveness. Then, in a simple ceremony conducted by Grebel and several others, the Anabaptist Reformation was established in 1525 at Zollikon, a town just outside Zürich.<sup>11</sup> Upon — and perhaps partially because of — Grebel's untimely death in 1526, Anabaptism resumed a somewhat haphazard course of development, but nonetheless early obtained many converts and rapidly spread across Germanic Switzerland. With members now calling themselves Brethren,<sup>12</sup> the movement diffused in all directions, and congregations were established in or around Basle, Waldshut, Schaffhausen, Schleithem,



*The Anabaptists were the victims of brutal persecution; burning at the stake was just one of the atrocities inflicted upon them. (D. K. Cassel, *Geschichte der Mennoniten*, p. 291.)*



Constance, St. Gallen, Appenzell, Glarus, Chur, Lucerne, Berne, Fribourg, Lausanne, Geneva,<sup>13</sup> and many smaller centers.

From the time of the movement's founding, the Swiss Brethren were victimized by brutal persecution inflicted by Zwinglians, Lutherans, and Catholics.<sup>14</sup> Because of this persecution and because of internal uncertainty, a group of Anabaptist dignitaries convened at Schleithem in 1527<sup>15</sup> and formulated the Schleithem Confession of Faith<sup>16</sup> which articulated the fundamental tenets of Anabaptism. In caustic reaction to the Schleithem articles and to Anabaptism's popularity, the authorities ordered a meeting of Swiss city councillors. These councillors met in Zürich and prepared a policy aimed at eradicating Swiss Anabaptism.<sup>17</sup> As a result, repression became even more ferocious; nevertheless, the Brethren survived.

Frustrated in their efforts to expunge the movement, the civil and clerical authorities subsequently issued the Edict of Speyer (1529)<sup>18</sup> which authorized even more savage measures. The Speyer decree condemned to death all Anabaptists who refused to recant, and barbarous atrocities were perpetrated against believers in an effort to obtain such recantations; a measure of their determination is the fact that bounties were paid to Anabaptist hunters for killing Brethren. In conse-

quence, most of the aforementioned Swiss Brethren congregations dissolved or declined as a majority of their members fled to the remote hinterlands where they lived incognito.<sup>19</sup>

But because of the ever-present danger of detection and death, many of the Brethren began fleeing Switzerland in search of less rancorous environments. Some migrated eastward through the Danube River Valley as far as Moravia,<sup>20</sup> while others moved northward into south-central Germany; but most spread northward along the Rhine River, settling in Baden, Württemberg, Alsace, Lorraine, the Palatinate, and the Rhineland. Some Brethren believers traveled even farther north, into the Netherlands,<sup>21</sup> and by the early 1530s Anabaptism was nearly obliterated in Switzerland. Some remnants of the faithful did manage to survive in the mountainous hinterlands of the country, but fortunately for Anabaptism the movement was destined to be reorganized in the Netherlands where it was given another name.

Swiss Brethren Anabaptism crossed the Dutch border in 1529, and several distinguished personalities were soon converted and began preaching and teaching its doctrines throughout the country. The Philipsz brothers, Obbe and Dirk, and Melchior Hofmann, a German, were the outstanding Anabaptist preachers in



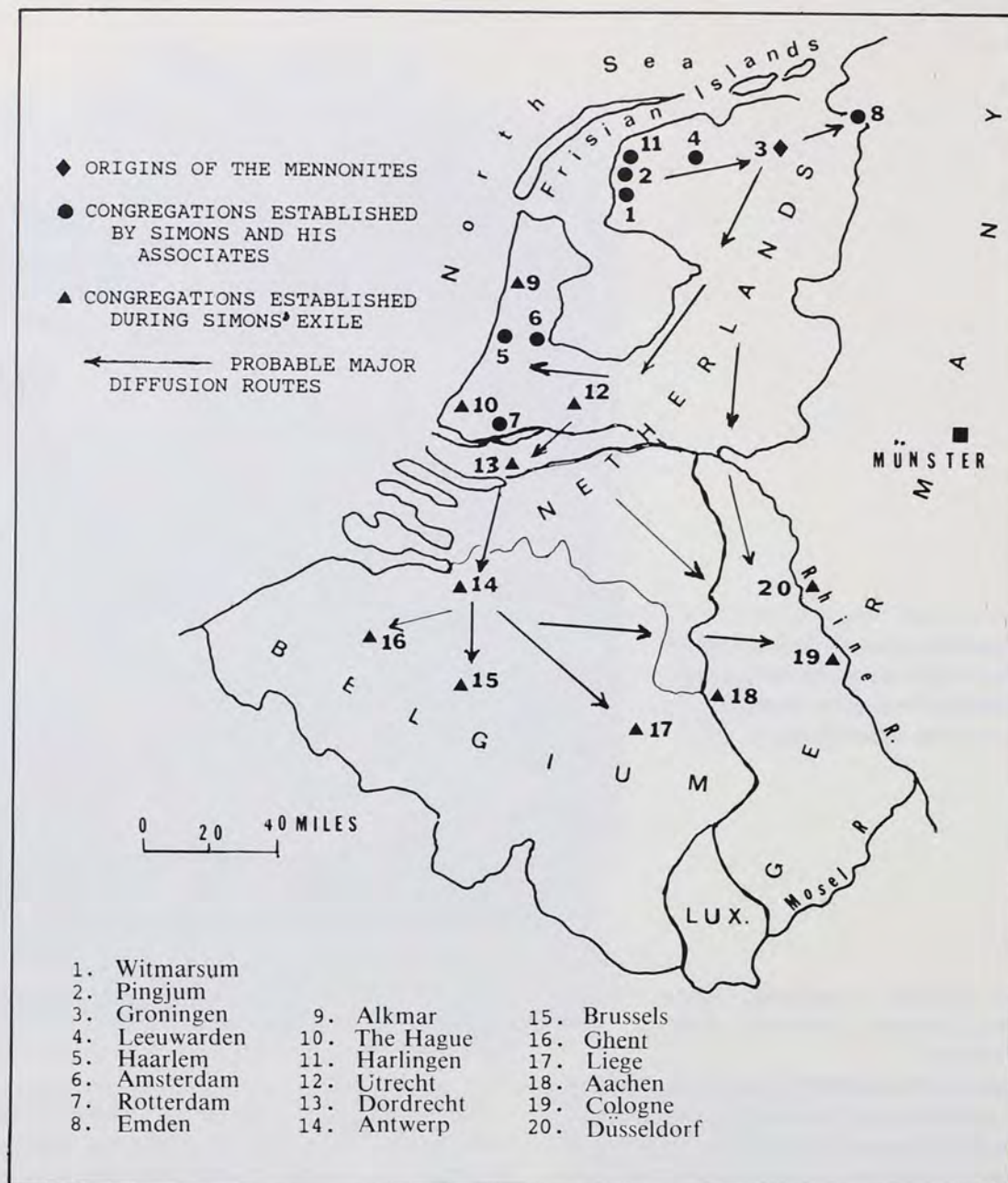


FIGURE 2: MENNONITE ANABAPTISM IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

Holland.<sup>22</sup> Hofmann was a brilliant, self-educated itinerant Lutheran lay preacher of vacillating convictions who accepted and began teaching Anabaptism in 1529. Unfortunately, he became the leader of the militant Millenarian movement (centered at Münster, Westphalia,<sup>23</sup>) which was responsible for the near-destruction of Anabaptism in the Netherlands. When the Millenarian movement was crushed in 1535 Hofmann escaped, only to die in prison several years later.<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, the more sophisticated and formally educated Philipsz brothers quietly spread the precepts of Anabaptism and obtained many converts. While traveling across the Netherlands they made the acquaintance of a Catholic priest named Menno Simons.<sup>25</sup> Simons (1496-1561), born in Witmarsum, was ordained in 1524 and began his priestly duties at Pingjum<sup>26</sup> where he met the Philipsz brothers; in 1533 he was

promoted and transferred to Groningen. Favorably impressed by the brothers and by their religious beliefs, Simons followed the Anabaptist movement with growing interest; an interest which caused him to question the doctrines and sacraments of Catholicism. Searching for answers, he began an intense, detailed study of the Scriptures. Unable to find satisfactory answers which would resolve his intensifying disenchantment with the Catholic Church, Simons denounced the papacy and was rebaptized by Obbe Philipsz at Groningen in 1536.<sup>27</sup>

#### MENNONITE RELIGIOUS-GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY, 1536-1561

Menno Simons soon became the most distinguished leader and most eloquent exponent of Anabaptism in the Netherlands. With the help of the Philipsz brothers, he modified and revised the beliefs and practices of





*Menno Simons. (Geschichte der Mennoniten, p. 3.)*

Swiss Brethren Anabaptism.<sup>28</sup> The Dutch Anabaptists were immediately called Menists,<sup>29</sup> and a few years later were named Mennonites.<sup>30</sup> Using Groningen as their base, the three leaders preached across the Netherlands, Friesland, and Belgium, attracting many converts. The movement spread rapidly and, between 1536 and 1542, flourishing congregations developed at Groningen, Witmarsum, Leeuwarden, Pingjum, Haarlem, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Emden, and other, smaller centers.<sup>31</sup>

The Dutch authorities quickly passed an edict designed to halt the remarkable growth of Menist Anabaptism,<sup>32</sup> and the persecution and oppression which resulted varied widely in degree of severity: fines, prison terms, denial of burial plots, and confiscation of property were some of the lighter penalties; more unfortunate victims paid a higher price — being sold as galley slaves, tortured, and/or drowned, burned at the stake, or even beheaded.<sup>33</sup>

With their lives imperiled, Simons and his associates were forced to leave the Netherlands in 1543. They traveled across Friesland, Hanover, Oldenburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg, Pomerania, Prussia, and Westphalia. Their proselytizing activities produced thriving congregations at Wismar, Altona, Lübeck, Stettin, Rostock, Danzig, Elbing, Königsburg, Wüstenfelde, and smaller towns. Simons lived in exile for nearly eighteen years, and during that time he tirelessly and eloquently articulated the precepts of Anabaptism across northern Germanic Europe and in the lower Rhine Valley. Finally, overwhelmed by the ravages of time, he returned to Wüstenfelde in 1560 and spent his remaining days there. He died in January, 1561.<sup>34</sup>

Despite exceedingly virulent persecution after Menno Simons' departure from the Low Countries, growth and dispersion of the movement continued, and between 1543 and 1560 significant congregations evolved around Alkmaar, The Hague, Harlingen, Utrecht, and Dordrecht in the Netherlands; and at Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, and Liege in Belgium. And, during this period, important congregations also developed at Aachen, Cologne, and Düsseldorf in Westphalia. In short, by the time of Simons' death the Mennonite movement could not be annihilated, but had spread through the Low Countries, the Lower Rhine Valley, and along the North and Baltic coasts of Germany.



*Menno Simons' old meetinghouse near Witmarsum, Friesland, Holland. (Geschichte der Mennoniten, p. 345.)*

#### **MENNONITE RELIGIOUS-GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY, 1560-1650**

The century of Mennonite religious and spatial experience commencing after Simons' death is exemplified by a gradual decline in the severity of persecution, the development of internal discord, fluctuating population growth, and extensive territorial dispersion. This era ends with the termination of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648),<sup>35</sup> a time of extremely harsh treatment against Anabaptist believers during which the civil and clerical authorities employed military force to vent their wrath. Belligerents often cruelly murdered, tortured, and raped the innocent Mennonites; believers who escaped lightly still often had their property destroyed or were molested in numerous other ways.<sup>36</sup>

The Mennonites were devastated and decimated by the Thirty Years' War,<sup>37</sup> but even while struggling to survive this long period of horrendous persecution they found time to argue the merits of their religious principles and practices. Because they did take their religion seriously, and because there was no church hierarchy, each individual was free to interpret the Scriptures independently. This independence resulted in religious





*Torture was used to "persuade" Anabaptist believers to recant; those who didn't were often put to death. (Geschichte der Mennoniten, p. 409.)*

chaos, which in turn caused the development of factionalism.<sup>38</sup> Disunity centered around the question of whether traditional church practices should be preserved or modernized. The question of the degree to which church practices should or should not be diluted caused the Mennonites to divide into four major groups: Frisians, Flemish, Waterlanders, and North Germans. These factions were classified according to the degree to which they subscribed to the idea of maintaining church purity.<sup>39</sup> The Frisians and the Flemish were the most traditionally conservative, the Waterlanders were more moderate, and the North Germans were the most liberal. Unable to agree among themselves, the major factions split further into a number of splinter groups.<sup>40</sup>

Alarmed by the growing divisiveness, the Mennonites initiated talks aimed at resolving their differences. Several conferences resulted in the formulation, in 1632, of the Dordrecht Confession of Faith<sup>41</sup> which articulated the principles of Mennonite Anabaptism, and to which some sub-sects still subscribe.<sup>42</sup> Communications continued, and in the late 1640s approximately seventy-five congregations agreed to meet in order to further resolve their differences, thus continuing the process of amalgamation.<sup>43</sup> Despite this internal unification movement, some members left the church, and these losses — combined with losses sustained due to persecution — produced an oscillating pattern of population growth.

Except for a period of stagnation during the Thirty Years' War, though, the founding of a multitude of new congregations in established areas, along with substantial spatial expansion of the overall Mennonite community, suggests the general trend through this period was one of population growth and, by 1650, new Men-

nonite communities were firmly entrenched in East Friesland and along the lower Rhine and lower Elbe river valleys. Major congregations were organized at Berg, Cleve, Crefeld, Emmerich, Gladbach, Neuwied, Jülich, and Rheydt; and there were a number of smaller communities in the lower Rhine Valley. Three large congregations — Aurich, Norden, and Leer — and several smaller churches were established in East Friesland, and, along with some smaller churches, significant congregations were founded at Fresenland, Friedrichstadt, and Glueckstadt in the lower Elbe section of Schleswig-Holstein.<sup>44</sup> Fortunately for the Mennonites, then, all external efforts to annihilate them had failed. But internal divisiveness would nearly prove to be their undoing in the years ahead.

### **MENNONITE RELIGIOUS-GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY, 1650-1815**

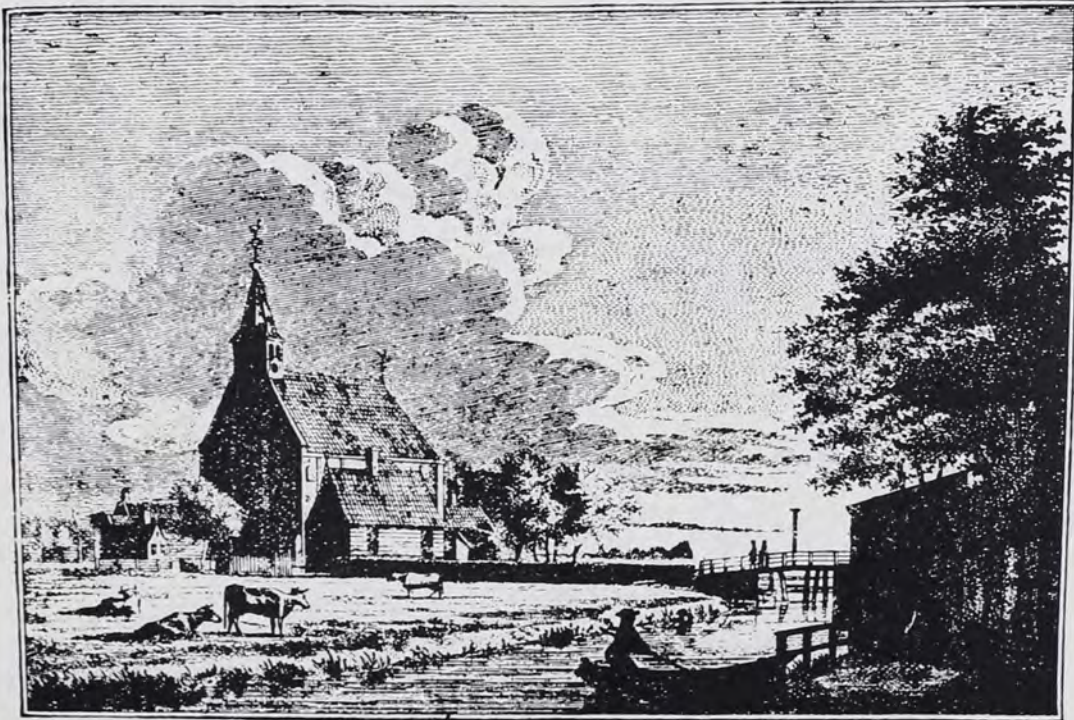
This period of Mennonite religious-spatial history is characterized (and strongly influenced) by the gradual rise of the new Age of Enlightenment. The mentality of the Enlightenment is at least partly definable by the slogan "liberty, equality, fraternity"; it affected the process of internal amalgamation, the population growth, the socio-cultural organization, and the settlement patterns of the European Mennonites.

Efforts to unify the church were proceeding satisfactorily throughout the latter half of the seventeenth century, but during the eighteenth century Mennonite life was rudely disrupted and significantly affected by several religious - philosophical bodies and other groups such as the Sconians, the Collegians, and even the Quakers.<sup>45</sup> Several permanent and temporary fractures were precipitated by these various groups. One such permanent rupture occurred in Switzerland,<sup>46</sup> where an ultra-conservative branch of the Swiss Mennonite Church was organized by Jacob Amman.<sup>47</sup> He accused the Swiss Mennonites of laxity in religious affairs and of ignoring certain traditional practices, the most important of which was the Bann. Unable to achieve an amiable solution the ultra-conservative body broke away, forming the Amish Mennonite sect. The Amish moved to Alsace, and after about a generation they emigrated to America.<sup>48</sup>

Another serious rift (this one involving two factions) developed in the Netherlands. One group stressed a Scripturally based faith, the other group emphasized a faith centered on traditional practices. The Scriptural group worshipped in a building decorated with the sign of the sun; they were called Sunnists. The traditionalists worshipped in a structure marked with the sign of a lamb and were known as Lammists. This fracture, known as the "War of the Lambs," wasn't fully resolved until the early nineteenth century.<sup>49</sup>

By the close of the eighteenth century Mennonite at-





*Mennonite meetinghouse in Buycksloot, Holland. (Geschichte der Mennoniten, p. 411.)*

titudes and values were changing in response to the principles of the Enlightenment, and they began assimilating into the general European culture. Adherence to St. Paul's proclamation to live apart from the world, and the traditional reverence of the land diminished in importance. Vast numbers of rural believers moved to towns and cities and obtained employment in a wide range of occupations; youths were apprenticed in the trades and educated in the professions. The Mennonites gradually became respected members of the general community, and many became prestigious citizens. Unfortunately, however, assimilation engendered secularism; as interest in religious affairs diminished, an alarming decline occurred in church membership,<sup>50</sup> and most congregations in the Netherlands and Switzerland experienced sharp decreases; some even closed. Elsewhere, only the congregations at Gladbach, Neuwied, and Crefeld, in the Rhine Valley; Emden, Norden and Leer in Friesland; and Altona and Lubeck along the Baltic coast remained open by the end of the eighteenth century. Indeed, the Mennonite population declined from an estimated 160,000 in 1700 to approximately 30,000 in 1815.<sup>51</sup>

During this period of precipitous population decline, the Prussian authorities — impressed with the Mennonites' agricultural and other skills — promised believers religious freedom and other special privileges

as an inducement to settle in Prussia.<sup>52</sup> Many West European Mennonites, distressed with the religious discord and the emerging new life-style, accepted this offer. Some settled in the congregations founded in the sixteenth century, but most pioneered new settlements. By the 1750s, Mennonites were farming large tracts in the fertile Nogat and Vistula river valleys, and large congregations had developed in or around Tiegenhof, Marienburg, Schwetz, Graudenz, Culm, Thorn, and Tilsit. Smaller congregations were organized in other towns and villages,<sup>53</sup> and the Prussian Mennonite population is estimated to have reached approximately 13,000 by the 1770s.<sup>54</sup>

The Prussian Mennonites, blessed with civil and religious freedom, became prosperous farmers and practiced their German Anabaptist way-of-life without fear of reprisal until the 1760s. During this period of tranquility, the Prussian authorities were becoming increasingly frightened by a number of external political and social forces. Finally, feeling threatened by these external forces, the Prussian government responded by gradually retracting Mennonite privileges,<sup>55</sup> and the stability of this simple, rural farm society was upset.

Catherine the Great admired the Prussian Mennonites and their way-of-life, and in the 1760s extended them an invitation to settle in Russia. Although she guaranteed all the special privileges formerly enjoyed in Prussia, her



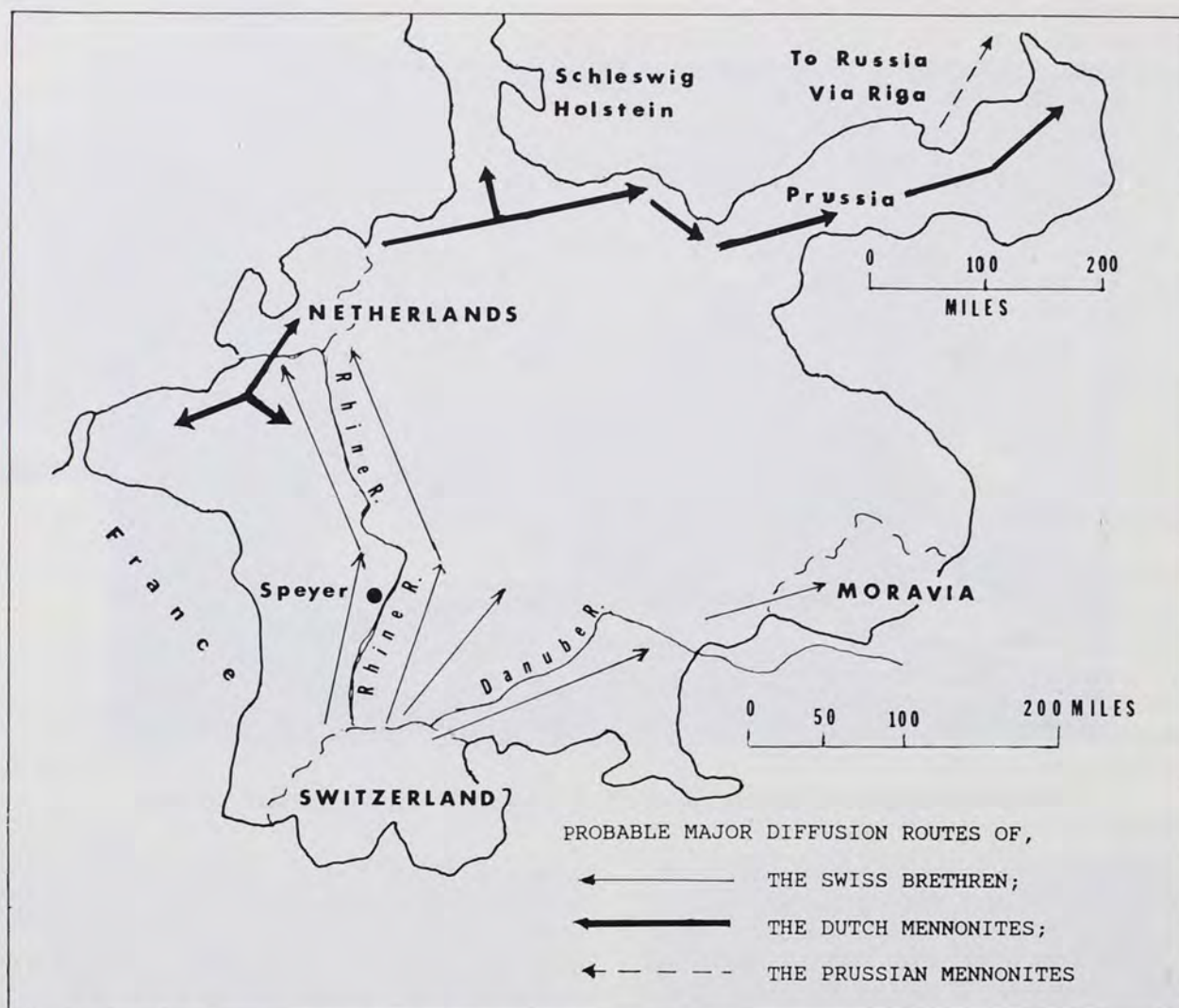


FIGURE 3: PROBABLE MAJOR DIFFUSION ROUTES OF ANABAPTISM, 1525-1800

invitation was ignored until 1786, when life there became intolerable. Following a two-year period of detailed investigation, the first Prussian Mennonites began the move to Russia<sup>56</sup> in 1788. In that year, about 228 families set out for the Black Sea coast near Odessa, sailing from Danzig to Riga. Trekking by wagon from Riga, they followed the Dnieper River to a place called Dubrovna where they spent the winter. In 1789 they resumed the journey along the Dnieper toward their destination. The authorities prohibited the Mennonites from proceeding to the Black Sea coast because of the raging Turkish War and, much to their chagrin, they were forced to settle in the Chortitza River Valley. (The Chortitza is a tributary of the Dnieper, just north of the Black Sea.<sup>57</sup>) Here they suffered all the rigors and privations of pioneer life for several years, but by the turn of the nineteenth century the Chortitza Colony was well established.

A large tract of land near the Molochnaya River (a small stream emptying into the Sea of Azov) became available to the Mennonites in 1803, and by the end of the year approximately 160 Prussian Mennonite families had established the Molotschna Colony there.<sup>58</sup> They also suffered all the hardships of frontier life, but with the help of their Chortitza brethren the new colony was firmly organized by 1810.<sup>59</sup> Prussian Mennonites established three additional colonies in territories controlled by Russia between 1790 and 1810: Deutsch-Michalin along the western border of Volhynia; and Deutsch-Kazun and Deutsch-Wymysle along the Vistula near Warsaw.<sup>60</sup> These three, all small colonies, eventually were abandoned, but Chortitza and Molotschna grew and prospered.<sup>61</sup> There were more than 200 Mennonite families in Chortitza Colony and nearly 300 families in Molotschna Colony by 1815.<sup>62</sup>



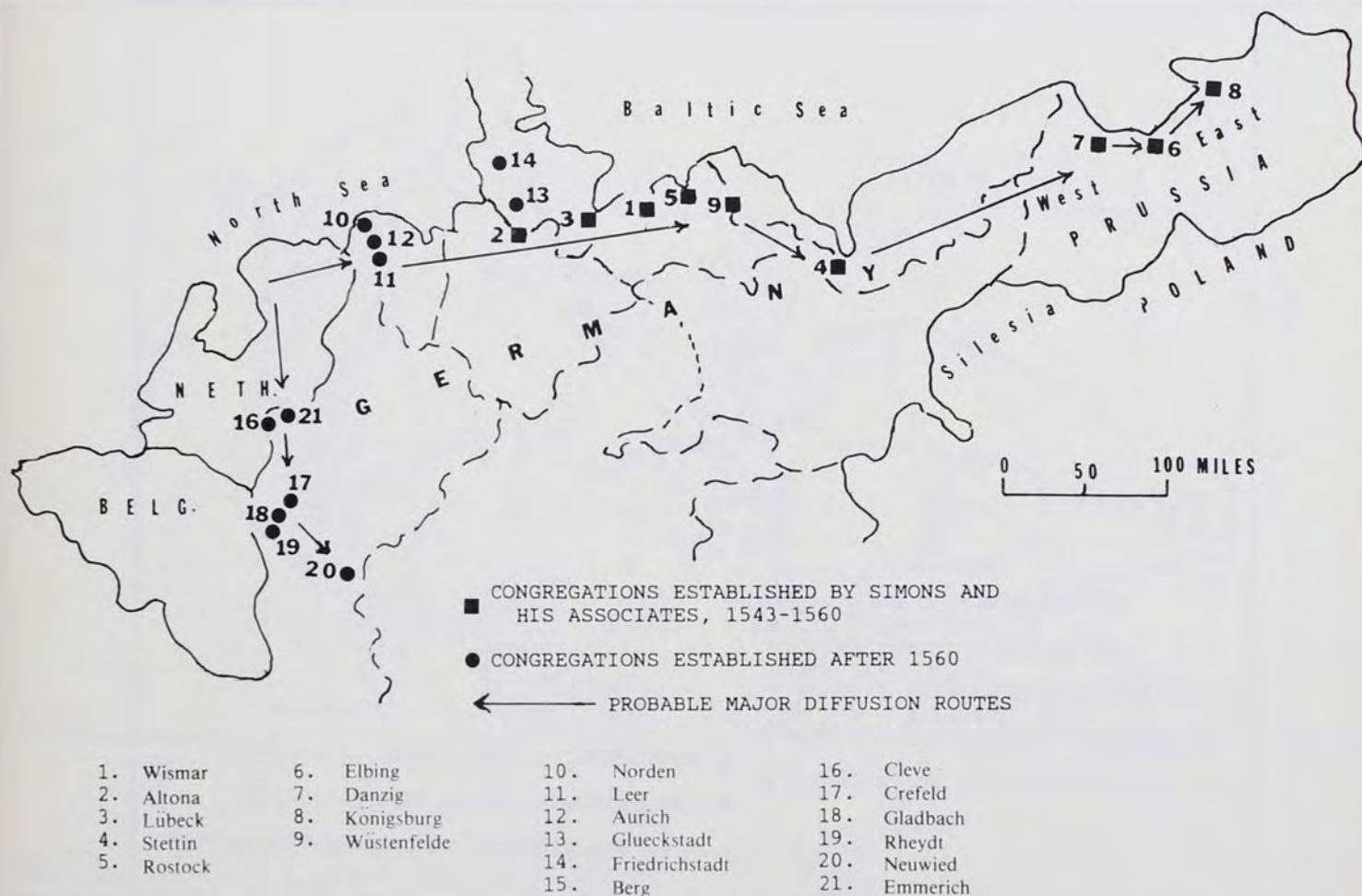


FIGURE 4: MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS IN NORTH AND WEST GERMANY

#### MENNONITE RELIGIOUS-GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY, 1815-1914

Europe's continuing struggle to obtain individual liberty, the national unification movement in Germany, several socio-cultural upheavals, and the birth of Communism are among the dominant events of this era, which is one of the most exciting times in European Mennonite religious-spatial history. In Western Europe, communication continued (and even increased) between the various branches of the church. And, although complete reunification never has been achieved, the various Mennonite bodies are now in spiritual accord with each other. Moreover, except for adult faith baptism and rejection of the oath, even the most conservative Mennonites abandoned their time-honored religious practices and mores<sup>63</sup> as religious and civil tranquility promoted economic prosperity, and accelerated the cultural assimilation which began during the preceding period.

Urbanization accompanied integration into the general European culture, and the Mennonites' commitment to farming and related occupations had almost totally evaporated by the end of the nineteenth century.

Because they had been absorbed into the general society, such events as the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848, the unification of Germany, and the Franco-Prussian War did not have detrimental effects on the Mennonites, and after 1830 the Mennonite population actually began to increase; by 1914 there were approximately 65,000 Mennonites in Western Europe. About 35,000 resided in the Netherlands, 12,000 in Friesland, 2,000 in France, 2,000 in Switzerland, and about 3,000 were dispersed across south-central Germany. The remainder were scattered through the Rhine Valley and along north German coastal areas. The principal congregations were centered at Amsterdam, Groningen, The Hague, Haarlem, Leeuwarden, and Rotterdam in



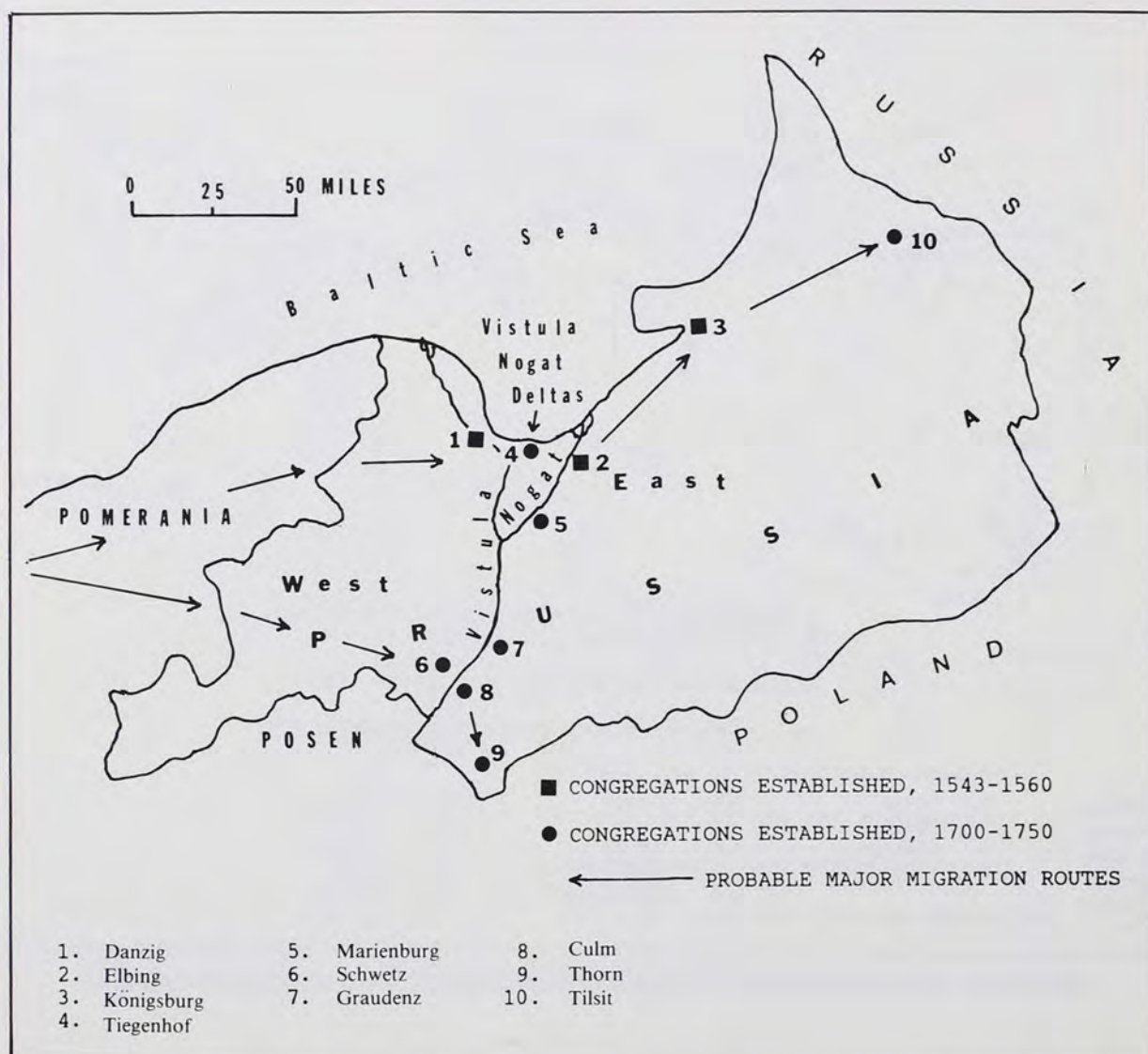


FIGURE 5: PRUSSIAN MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS, 1543-1800.

Holland; at Emden, Leer, and Norden in Friesland; and at Crefeld along the Rhine.<sup>64</sup>

During the early nineteenth century the Prussian Mennonites continued migrating to Imperial Russia, with most settling in the Chortitza or Molotschna colonies, although a few settled in the aforementioned three small colonies along or near the Vistula River;<sup>65</sup> when these were abandoned, some of their residents relocated to Chortitza or Molotschna, while some moved to other locations.<sup>66</sup> Migration to the Chortitza and Molotschna settlements came to an end by the late 1830s because no more land was available in those areas. By 1840, about 400 families were living in eighteen villages in the Chortitza settlement and farming nearly 40,000 acres. Almost 1,200 families were residing

in fifty-eight villages in the Molotschna Colony by 1840, and they farmed approximately 325,000 acres.<sup>67</sup>

Astonishingly, in Czarist Russia, the most arbitrary state in Europe, the Mennonites enjoyed almost complete civil and religious freedom. Not required to obey laws which violated their conscience, Russian Mennonites developed a tradition-directed, rural folk society. They practiced their Anabaptist beliefs, preserved their Germanic culture and language, established a sectarian school system, and devoted their lives to farming.<sup>68</sup> Peace and prosperity afforded time to argue the merits of religious beliefs and practices, and factionalism developed among the Russian Mennonites just as it had among their western European predecessors. Six major groups developed: Kleine Gemeinde, Die





FIGURE 6: MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS IN RUSSIA, 1790-1914.

Groze Gemeinde, Mennoniten Bruder Gemeinde, Jerusalem Friends, Peters Brethren, and the Mennonite Alliance.<sup>69</sup> Since dissension focused around the question of modernizing the church, these six divisions can be catalogued as conservative, moderate, or liberal.<sup>70</sup>

The environment in Czarist Russia was conducive to population growth, and the original 10,000 Prussian immigrants increased to 35,000 by 1860.<sup>71</sup> Numerical growth eventually caused a serious land shortage because the government refused to make additional parcels available, and in addition prohibited heads of households from subdividing estates. It is believed that there were 1625 full, and 675, partial estates in Chortitza and Molotschna combined by the 1860s. It is further believed that some two-thirds of the families in-

habiting the two colonies were landless.<sup>73</sup>

The more perceptive Mennonites had anticipated such a shortage as early as the 1830s, and had initiated a fund-raising program to procure land. Unfortunately, this program could not satisfy the need for tillable acreage, and the farm crisis became so acute that the Mennonites appealed to the government for relief. Subsequently, 64,000 acres were made available for settlement. Then, being a thoroughly autocratic and unpredictable state, in 1853 the government invited the Prussian Mennonites to colonize a large tract around Samara near the Volga River. Thus, the lands obtained through fund raising, the territory gained through the appeal, and the Samara tract, provided the impetus for a period of internal migration and resettlement com-



mening in 1836 and lasting until the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>73</sup>

The Samara Colony was established by several hundred new immigrant pioneer families from Prussia between 1853 and 1859, and a number of Russian Mennonite families also settled there during the 1860s. By the early 1870s Samara consisted of 300 families dispersed among twenty village congregations. The villages were small, each had only about fifteen families; nevertheless, in 1875 Samara was the third largest Mennonite settlement in Czarist Russia.<sup>74</sup>

The early decades of the era of internal resettlement were characterized by the establishment of the first "daughter colonies" by the landless inhabitants of the original "mother colonies," Chortitza and Molotschna. They developed settlements at Kuban and Terek and smaller centers in the Caucasus; at Orenburg and Ufa near the Urals; and around a number of small communities throughout the Crimea.<sup>75</sup> The next phase of internal migration was dominated by a movement to western Siberia from all the previously established colonies. Settlements were founded at Omsk, Tomsk, and Tobolsk near the route of the present day trans-Siberia railway; and at Khiva, Bokhara, Samarkand, and Tashkent in the arid and semi-arid regions of Turkestan. The colonies around Omsk, Tomsk, and Tobolsk were settled by pioneers from Samara, Orenburg, and Ufa.<sup>76</sup> Ukrainian and Crimean Mennonites emigrated across the salt flats around the Caspian Sea to settle in Turkestan. The period of internal migration came to a close when inhabitants from all the Siberian congregations established a colony at Slavgorod-Barnaul in the early 1900s.<sup>77</sup>

Slavgorod-Barnaul was the last and largest of the daughter colonies. By 1910 it had grown to be the third largest Mennonite settlement in Russia.<sup>78</sup> Although the exact number is unknown, it is believed that between 1,000 and 1,300 families were residing in fifty-nine village congregations and farming about 135,000 acres in Slavgorod-Barnaul. Statistically, villages there were comprised of between seventeen and twenty-two families, and each family controlled between 105 and 135 acres.<sup>79</sup>

Frightened by the national unification movements in Germany and Italy, by the formulation of the North German Confederation, and by the Franco-Prussian War; distressed by the on-going Turkish conflict, and concerned with peasant unrest engendered by envy of the Mennonites, the government withdrew almost all of the Mennonites' special privileges in the 1860s and 1870s. In consequence, the Mennonites appealed to the United States and Canada to accept them, as the loss of privileges became intolerable. Following a lengthy period of negotiations, a decade of emigration commenced in 1873.<sup>80</sup>

Between 1873 and 1884 some 18,000 Russian Men-

nonites decided to embark on the long journey to America; Odessa and Lemburg were the usual assembly points. From the assembly stations the emigrants traveled to Altona, sailed from there to Liverpool, England, and then crossed the Atlantic to New York. From New York they dispersed into the interior of the continent,<sup>81</sup> with approximately 10,000 settling in Minnesota, the Dakotas, Kansas, and Nebraska in the United States; and the remaining 8,000 spreading across Manitoba, Canada.<sup>82</sup> Despite the migration, the original Russian Mennonite population of around 10,000 had increased substantially by the beginning of the twentieth century, and it is believed that in 1914 there were 100,000 Russian Mennonites tilling three million acres.<sup>83</sup>

### MENNONITE RELIGIOUS-GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY SINCE 1914

The story of the Mennonites in twentieth century Europe is a story of almost unbelievable violence, hardship, and sorrow. All of the Mennonite communities there suffered the effects of global economic depression, the horrors of two world wars, and the rise of totalitarianism. (So, for the most part, did their non-Mennonite neighbors, of course.) The Russian Mennonites were even more unfortunate for, in addition, they were devastated by the Communist Revolution and the turbulent sequence of events involved in the process of Sovietizing the Russian people. Unfortunately, it is possible to relate only the highlights of this convulsive period.

Except for those in neutral Switzerland, most Mennonite communities were overrun and destroyed by the World War I (1914-1918) belligerents. Believers and non-believers alike suffered all the expected consequences of war; many were killed and many more left homeless as houses and property were destroyed. There were chronic shortages of food, clothing, and shelter. Unfortunately, rape and rapine were also common tragedies.<sup>84</sup> Soon after the war the global economic depression enveloped Europe. With the continent already in chaos as a result of the military conflict, and with the added burden of economic hardships, the climate was right for aspiring tyrants, and several subsequently succeeded to power.

Since the Mennonites were ethnic Germans and were, in western Europe, fully assimilated, they were never molested or incarcerated by the Nazi regime. Their suffering, then, during World War II (1939-1945) was comparable to that of other Europeans during the period<sup>85</sup> — they were not singled out, as were the Jews, for extermination. Even so, it was difficult for the Mennonites (and the general population) to begin reconstructing their lives until about 1950. But despite the hardships of two world wars and the inter-war period, they remained active in European affairs. And, although their energies



and meager resources were essentially directed toward recovery, they were still vitally interested in their spiritual life. They were strongly evangelical and philanthropical,<sup>86</sup> and even during the most difficult episodes since 1914 they found time to enhance internal communication, to evangelize and proselytize, and to unselfishly sacrifice exceedingly skimpy resources to provide relief.

In 1925 the Swiss Mennonites expanded communications with their North American brethren by organizing and sponsoring a World Mennonite Conference. In 1951 they established a European Bible School; that Bible School is now supported cooperatively by Swiss and French Mennonites. The Dutch Mennonites organized a Work Group Against Military Service in 1922 (it was revised in 1925), founded a Mennonite Peace Committee in 1936 (it has been meeting annually since 1961), and developed the Mennonite Sister Circle in 1952. The West German Mennonites opened a mutual Aid Center in 1963.<sup>87</sup> In addition, several cooperatively sponsored endeavors have been developed by European Mennonites. In 1952 they organized the European Mennonite Evangelical Council, the Federation of Mennonite Sister Circles, and the Mennonite Youth Agency. In 1954 they opened the Mennonite Relief Commission in an effort to provide aid to Soviet Mennonites, and today they conduct missionary activities and extend relief to many countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.<sup>88</sup>

The Mennonites in the Soviet Union were in desperate need of the help offered by their Western European brethren. As already mentioned, their troubles began under the czars when their prosperity was envied by the Russian peasants. During World War I the Mennonites were deliberately terrorized and murdered by Czarist forces; they were accorded the same treatment by both the Red and White armies during the Bolshevik Revolution — their property was pillaged and destroyed and many were cruelly murdered. Those who escaped death suffered from exposure, famine, disease, rape, and a host of other privations and tragedies.<sup>89</sup>

The plight of the Russian Mennonites became critical in the wake of the country's total economic collapse in the early 1920s. In consequence, a delegation was sent to North America to obtain aid, and to negotiate with the governments of the United States and Canada the question of Soviet Mennonite emigration. Immigration policies precluded settlement in the United States but, after a period of frustrating discussions with the newly-installed Soviet government, many were able to establish homes in Canada. By the time emigration to that country slowed to a trickle in 1927, 14,000 Russian Mennonites had moved there.<sup>90</sup>

Those who decided to stay in the Soviet Union and struggled to reconstruct their tradition-directed, German Anabaptist farm culture were surprised and frustrated in their hopes and efforts when the regime

implemented the first Five Year Plan in 1928. Collectivization of agriculture and resettlement were mercilessly and forcefully imposed on the Mennonites; many were relocated in non-agricultural endeavors. Entire communities were moved, and families were deliberately scattered by the government.<sup>91</sup> Predictably, Mennonite congregations deteriorated, and the Germanic culture began to disintegrate as policies to Sovietize the populace were intensified. In 1929-30, more than 13,000 attempted to escape the unbearable rigors of Soviet life; only 5,700 succeeded.<sup>92</sup>

During the next two decades the plight of the Mennonites became even worse. Because they were classified as dangerous (potentially enemy) aliens, they were savagely victimized by the government purges which swept the country in 1937-38. Then, scarcely three years later, the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union. They considered the Mennonites ethnic Germans and protected them; the Soviets considered them enemies and imprisoned them. Not surprisingly, after the Red Army gained the initiative more than 35,000 Mennonites fled westward with the retreating Germany Army.<sup>93</sup> About 12,000 of these made their way to Canada or Latin America; when the Reich capitulated the other 23,000 were forcefully repatriated to the U.S.S.R. During the 1940s, most Mennonites were relocated in western Siberia; probably only a small number now remain west of the Urals.<sup>94</sup>

## CONCLUSION

More than four-and-one-half centuries after the Anabaptist movement began, the Old World has a Mennonite population of about 160,000 believers nearly equally divided between two widely separated areas — Western Europe and Western Siberia. Not surprisingly, those two areas have experienced opposite population trends since 1914; Western Europe's Mennonite population has increased nearly twenty-five per cent since then, but the number of Mennonites in the Soviet Union has declined by a similar percentage.<sup>95</sup>

Presently there are about 85,000 Mennonites concentrated in urban congregations in three areas of Western Europe: the Low countries, Northwest Germany, and the Rhine Valley. Approximately 50,000 are dispersed across Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg. Another 20,000 are spread along the coastal sections of West Germany,<sup>96</sup> and about 5,000 are scattered through the Rhine Valley from the Palatinate to Switzerland. The rest are sprinkled across the central and southern regions of West Germany.

In the Soviet Union the Mennonite population has declined from about 100,000 in 1914 to around 75,000 today. But, since nearly 32,000 believers left the country since 1914,<sup>97</sup> it suggests that had there *not* been such an emigration, population would probably have increased



in spite of two world wars, revolution, civil war, economic privation, and other calamities. All the information available today suggests that nearly all the Soviet Mennonites are now located in Western Siberia; the degree to which their faith has been modernized, and their residential patterns are unknown; the degree to which they have been "Sovietized" is a matter of conjecture.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Once again the writer is deeply indebted to, and gratefully acknowledges the help provided by several Bloomsburg University staff members. Mr. Roger Fromm, reference librarian, contributed many hours procuring source materials through inter-library loan. Ms. Jane Harrison and Ms. Fern Gallagher, word processing specialists, labored beyond the call of duty in preparing the several drafts, and Ms. Linda Haines, duplicating services specialist, provided much valuable assistance in preparing the maps.

#### RELIGIOUS WORDS AND TERMS

Thorough understanding of many complex religious words, terminologies, and certain theological precepts practically requires some degree of training in theology. Readers not conversant with such words, terms, and precepts, as well as the tenets of the confessions of faith referred to in the study can obtain explanations in the following sources: C. J. Dyck, Editor, *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1967); John Horsch, *Mennonites In Europe* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1950); F. H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Star King Press, Beacon Hill, 1958); Littell, *The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism*, 3rd ed. (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1972); F. E. Mayer, *The Religious Bodies of America* (St. Louis: Missouri, Concordia Publishing House, 1961); C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Berne, IN: Mennonite Book Concern, 1945); and G. H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1962).

#### GEOGRAPHICAL WORDS AND TERMS

The writer's reference to, and use of, several spatial terms and place names may be unclear to some readers. To facilitate reading, these terms and place names are herewith explained. The word Russia is used for time periods prior to the Communist Revolution. The terms Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) and Soviet Union are used interchangeably and refer to the post-revolutionary period. Siberia is the Asian part of the U.S.S.R., and West Europe is meant to include the non-Russian-speaking portion of the European continent.

#### SPELLINGS

The writer has attempted to preserve the spelling of proper and place names of the various periods encompassed by the study. In cases where there is disagreement or confusion the following references served as the primary sources for spellings: C. J. Dyck, Editor, *An Introduction to Mennonite History*; John Horsch, *Mennonites In Europe*; and C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*.

#### MAP NOTES AND SOURCES

Three interrelated factors — time, space, and scale — influenced the quantity of detail and accuracy of the maps. Because of the necessarily small scale, most boundaries are generalized, and only that spatial information essential to the study is included on the maps. Because of the vast expanse of time encompassed, many boundary changes have occurred and they may not have been mapped with precision. Consequently some boundaries may be inaccurate. It should be noted that diffusion and migration lines are suggested as probable routes.

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#### ENDNOTES

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<sup>3</sup>Dyck, pp. 9-35; Klees, pp. 13-30; Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (1945), pp. 9-95.

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<sup>5</sup>Dyck, pp. 9-35; F. E. Mayer, *The Religious Bodies of America* (St. Louis, The Concordia Press, 1961), pp. 399-405; Klees, pp. 13-30.

<sup>6</sup>Walter Klassen, *Anabaptism Neither Protestant Nor Catholic* (Waterloo, Ontario, Conrad Press, 1973); Franklin H. Littell, *The MacMillan Atlas History of Christianity* (New York, The MacMillan Co., 1976), p. 69.

<sup>7</sup>Fritz Blank, *Brothers in Christ* (Scottsdale, PA, Herald Press, 1961), Mayer, pp. 399-405.

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<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>John Horsch, *Mennonites in Europe* (Scottsdale, PA, Mennonite Publishing House, 1950), pp. 30-115; Williams, Ch. 6.

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<sup>13</sup>Franklin H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (Boston, Star King Press, Beacon Hill, 1958), pp. 11-23; Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (1945), pp. 9-95.

<sup>14</sup>Dyck, pp. 26-35; Delbert Gratz, *Bernese Anabaptism*, (Scottsdale, PA, Herald Press, 1953).

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>Harold S. Bender and C. Henry Smith, *Mennonites and Their Heritage, A Handbook of Mennonite Beliefs* (Scottsdale, PA, Herald Press, 1942); Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 126-215.



<sup>17</sup>Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 126-168; Henry A. Burrage, *A History of Anabaptism in Switzerland*, Pub. 1882 (New York, Lenox Hill Pub., and Dist. Co., 1973), pp. 10-21.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>Dyck, pp. 26-35; Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 126-164.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>John C. Wenger, *The Doctrine of the Mennonites*, Scottdale, PA (Herald Press, 1950); Horsch, pp. 160-218.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>Harold S. Bender and John Horsch, *Menno Simons Life and Writings* (Scottdale, PA, Mennonite Publishing House, 1936); John C. Wenger, *What Mennonites Believe* (Scottdale, PA, Herald Press, 1977); Bender and Smith, *Mennonites and Their Heritage, A Handbook on Mennonite History and Beliefs*.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>Dyck, pp. 75-89; Bender and Smith, *Mennonites and Their Heritage, A Handbook of Mennonite Beliefs*, 5th Printing, 1977; Henry Dosker, *The Dutch Anabaptists* (Philadelphia, The Judson Press, 1921).

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>Dyck, pp. 75-89; John C. Wenger, *Even Unto Death* (Richmond, John Knox Press, 1961); Horsch, *The Mennonites in Europe*, pp. 160-218.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>Dyck, pp. 75-89; A. L. E. Verheyden, *Anabaptism in Flanders, 1530-1660, A Century of Struggle, Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History* (Scottdale, PA, Herald Press, 1961), p. xvi.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup>Dyck, pp. 75-102; Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 164-215; Horsch, *The Mennonites in Europe*, pp. 227-265; Wenger, *Even Unto Death*.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup>Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 164-215; Horsch, *The Mennonites in Europe*, pp. 160-238; Verheyden, p. xvi.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup>Dyck, pp. 75-102.

<sup>42</sup>Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 164-215; Horsch, *The Mennonites in Europe*, pp. 160-238.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup>Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, pp. 164-215 and 245-296.

<sup>46</sup>Dyck, pp. 111-126; John A. Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 3rd. Ed (Baltimore Johns Hopkins Press, 1980), pp. 25-49.

<sup>47</sup>Hostetler, pp. 25-49.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup>Dyck, pp. 111-126; Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 164-215 and 245-296; Horsch, *The Mennonites in Europe*, pp. 227-266.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup>Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 245-296.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup>Dyck, pp. 126-145; Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 383-535; Horsch, *The Mennonites in Europe*, pp. 271-289.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>Dyck, 126-145.

<sup>63</sup>Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 383-545.

<sup>64</sup>Dyck, pp. 275-291; Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 383-545; Horsch, *The Mennonites in Europe*, pp. 271-289.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup>Dyck, pp. 275-290; Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus* (Altona, Manitoba, D. W. Friesen and Sons, 1962).

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup>Dyck, pp. 125-146 and 275-290; Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1945, pp. 383-534; Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 4th Ed., 1957, pp. 237-345 and 464-526.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.* Presently, European Mennonite evangelical activities and relief services are most meritorious.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*.

<sup>90</sup>Dyck, pp. 126-145 and 275-290; Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1957, pp. 464-526; Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*

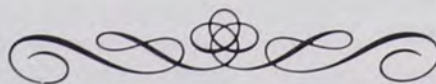
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<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*


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# Altes und Neues



## BOOK REVIEW

Haag, Earl C., editor. *A Pennsylvania German Anthology*. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1988. 366pp. \$45.00 hard cover; \$14.95 soft cover.

With Earl C. Haag we say, "*Endlich, endlich, endlich iss es buch rausgewwe!*" ("Finally, at last and in the end, the book has finally been issued!") Editor Haag has accepted a difficult assignment — to present a selection from representative Pennsylvania German writers that gives some flavor of the subject matter and writing style which is involved. The task is overwhelming, and leaves him vulnerable to many second guesses: This reviewer agrees from experience that every reader will have his own priority list of authors who ought to have been included, as well as those who might well have been ignored.

But Earl Haag has indeed produced a book which is not only an anthology, but a cultural reader as well. Poetry from such accepted masters of the dialect as Henry Harbaugh, Rachel Bahn, Astor C. Wuchter, Charles Calvin Ziegler, and Lee Grumbine is to be found here. Poetic efforts are placed in context (and are contrasted) with prose efforts by authors ranging from Edward Rauch to Clarence G. Reitnauer. Plays are not neglected but are given proper attention with favorites by Paul R. Wieand and Irwin R. Klinger.

All writers who have attempted to publish in *Pennsylvaniaanisch Deutsch*, the dialect of the Pennsylvania Germans, have met the same response at one time or another: "The market is too small to make it worthwhile." For commercial companies perhaps; but surely not for the student of folk culture or the linguist. It is simply too bad that we have so few publishers who will even attempt it, for it is done successfully elsewhere; for example, at dialect literature houses such as the Meininger Verlag in Neustadt a. d. W., or Badenia Verlag, Karlsruhe, in the old homeland.

W. T. Parsons

## HELP FOR SCHOLARS

Winterthur Museum and Gardens now offers researchers using its library free shuttle bus service from the Wilmington AMTRAK station to the museum. The new service, which operates on Thursdays and Fridays only, allows scholars greater access to the resources of the Winterthur library. The bus makes one trip in the

morning, picking up researchers at approximately 9:30 and bringing them directly to the library. In the afternoon the bus makes one trip back to the train station after the library closes at 4:30. Reservations are necessary for this service, and those interested should call Mrs. Wiggins at 888-4630 or 1-800-448-3883 to reserve a seat. Reservations must be made one week in advance of the planned visit in order to guarantee a seat on the bus.

The Winterthur library has extensive collections of printed design sources, architectural pattern books, American and British manufacturers' trade catalogues, Shaker books and manuscripts, American housekeeping guides, American and British periodicals, city directories, probate court records, artists' and craftsmen's records, and tax and census records. The library also offers a large photographic study collection of decorative arts objects and historic interiors. The manuscript collection includes estate inventories, correspondence, business records, life insurance records, import-export records, drawings, watercolors, prints, pattern books, broadsides, price lists, paper dolls and games, journals and diaries, textile and wallpaper samples, city maps and views. For further information on the Winterthur library collections, contact Ms. Neville Thompson at 888-4701 or 1-800-448-3883.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The Vernacular Architecture Forum is soliciting proposals for presentations at its 1989 Annual Meeting to be held in St. Louis, Missouri. Papers may address any aspect of vernacular architecture in the United States or abroad, and should be primarily analytical rather than descriptive in content. Proposals may be for either a 20-minute paper on a subject the author has extensively researched or a 10-minute "work in progress" report. Selection will be based on the proposed paper's original contribution to the study of vernacular architecture.

Proposals should be type written with the author's name, address and telephone number in the upper right hand corner and be a maximum of 400 words in length. The text should succinctly state the paper's content, delineating the scope, argument, and method, not just outline its topical considerations. Deadline for submission: 30 November 1988. Accepted papers, prepared to conform to the prescribed time limits, must be submitted to the session chair by 31 March 1989. Send three copies of the proposal to: Thomas C. Hubka, VAF



Papers Chair, Dept. of Architecture, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201.

#### CALL FOR INFORMATION

In preparation for an exhibit of Pfaltzgraff pottery to open in the spring of 1989, The Historical Society of York County is seeking materials pertaining to the Pfaltzgraff Pottery Company from the early 19th century to the present. Especially needed are historical documents, photographs, early catalogues, company records, and other memorabilia, as well as fine and unusual examples of Pfaltzgraff pottery. Please contact Wade Lawrence, Curator of Collections, The Historical Society of York County, 250 East Market Street, York, Pennsylvania, 17403, or call (717) 848-1587.

#### CHILDREN'S PORTRAITS NEEDED FOR EXHIBIT

Portraits of Lancaster County children by artists known to have worked in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, are being sought by the Heritage Center of Lancaster County for a loan exhibition scheduled for 1989. Works are desired in all mediums (oil, watercolor, pencil, pen and ink, pastel and sculpture) within the time frame of 1750-1925. Some of the artists known to have worked in Lancaster County include: Jacob Eichholtz, Arthur Armstrong, John Jay Libhart, William Williams, Benjamin West, Charles Demuth, Leon von Ossko, J. A. Danner, Caroline Peart, Lloyd Mifflin, Lewis Towson Voight, and Jacob Maentel. Individuals or institutions having knowledge of appropriate works for exhibition are asked to contact: Patricia Keller-Conner, Director/Curator, The Heritage Center of Lancaster County, Box 997 Penn Square, Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17603 or call (717) 299-6440.

#### TOPICAL LISTS OF BACK ISSUES & REPRINTS AVAILABLE

The following topical lists, compiled from *The Twenty-Five Year Index to PENNSYLVANIA FOLKLIFE* are offered free of charge; simply send a self-addressed stamped envelope and a note of the numbers desired (no more than four lists to each envelope, please) to: Free List Offer, Pennsylvania Folklife Society, P.O. Box 92, Collegeville, PA 19426.

- # 1 Migration list
- # 2 Migration, arranged by Author
- # 3 Genealogy and Family History
- # 4 Folk Art & Fraktur
- # 5 Mennonites
- # 6 Folk Medicine & Powwow
- # 7 The Occult & Supernatural / Witches
- # 8 Goschenhoppen & Perkiomen Regions
- # 9 Authors from Goschenhoppen & Perkiomen
- # 10 Folk Custom & Beliefs / Folklore & Folklife Studies
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- # 13 Folksongs, Music & Singers
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- # 15 Dialect & Dialect Writers
- # 16 Holidays and Feast Days
- # 17 Edna Eby Heller articles as found in *Pa Dutchman & Pa Folklife*
- # 18 Moravians & Schwenkfelders
- # 19 Travels and Travel Accounts / Taverns
- # 20 Folklore & Folklife Questionnaires



39th Annual

Pennsylvania Dutch

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The Kutztown Folk Festival is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Folklife Society, a nonprofit educational corporation affiliated with URSINUS COLLEGE, Collegeville, Pennsylvania. The Society's purposes are threefold: First, the demonstrating and displaying of the lore and folkways of the Pennsylvania Dutch through the annual Kutztown Folk Festival; second, the collecting, studying, archiving and publishing the lore of the Dutch Country and Pennsylvania through the publication of PENNSYLVANIA FOLKLIFE Magazine; and third, using the proceeds for scholarships and general educational purposes at URSINUS COLLEGE.



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